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MAY 1989
ISSUE EIGHT
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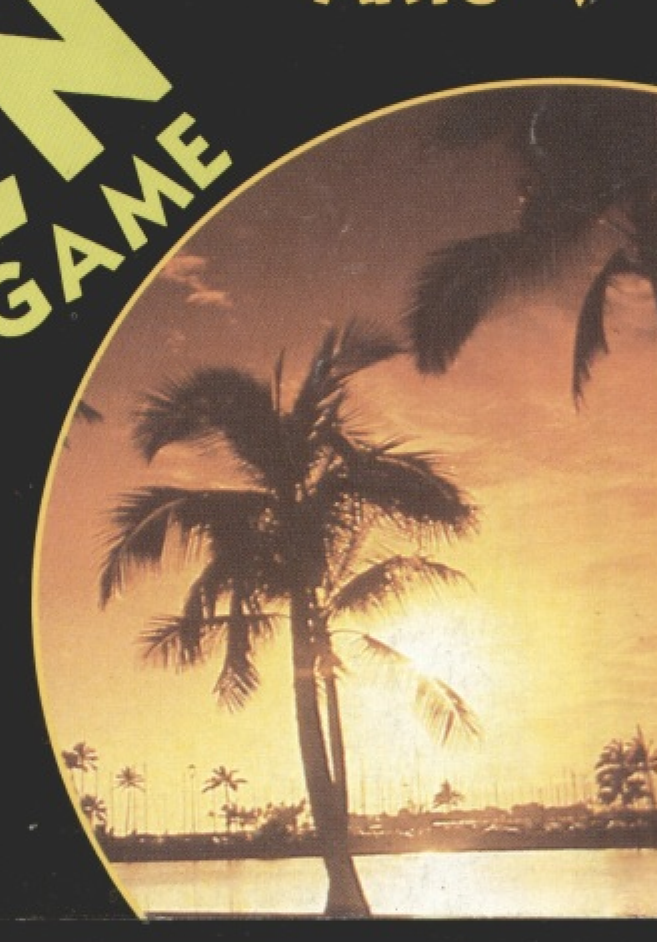
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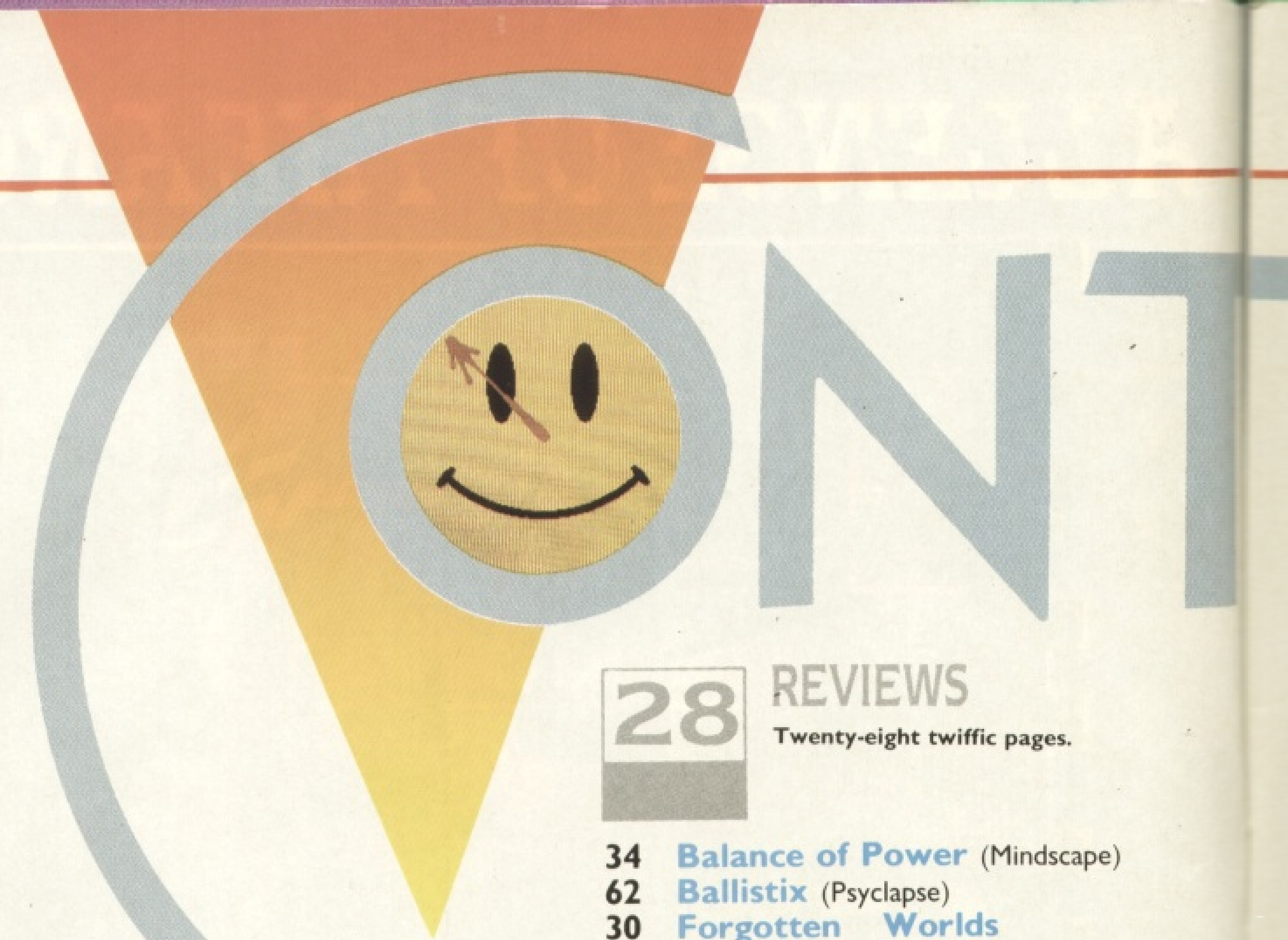
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Abba say 'Thank You For The Music' and 'Cheers Ears' to: Richard Slater (who took care of the panic).



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Come to where the Big Money is... Join laugh-a-minute Les Dennis and Mr Babbage the computer in another cashmendous half hour of Family Fortunes.

8 NEWS

The Watchmen **film and game are coming, as is a mountain of Mirrorsoft software. Plus: ST, Amiga and PC Charts and Updates.**

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Can you play Populous? **Electronic Arts wants to reward the best player in the world with a holiday in one of four fabulous far-away lands.**

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Work on The Bitmap Brothers' sequel to Xenon **is well and truly under way. We found out whether it really was all done with mirrors.**

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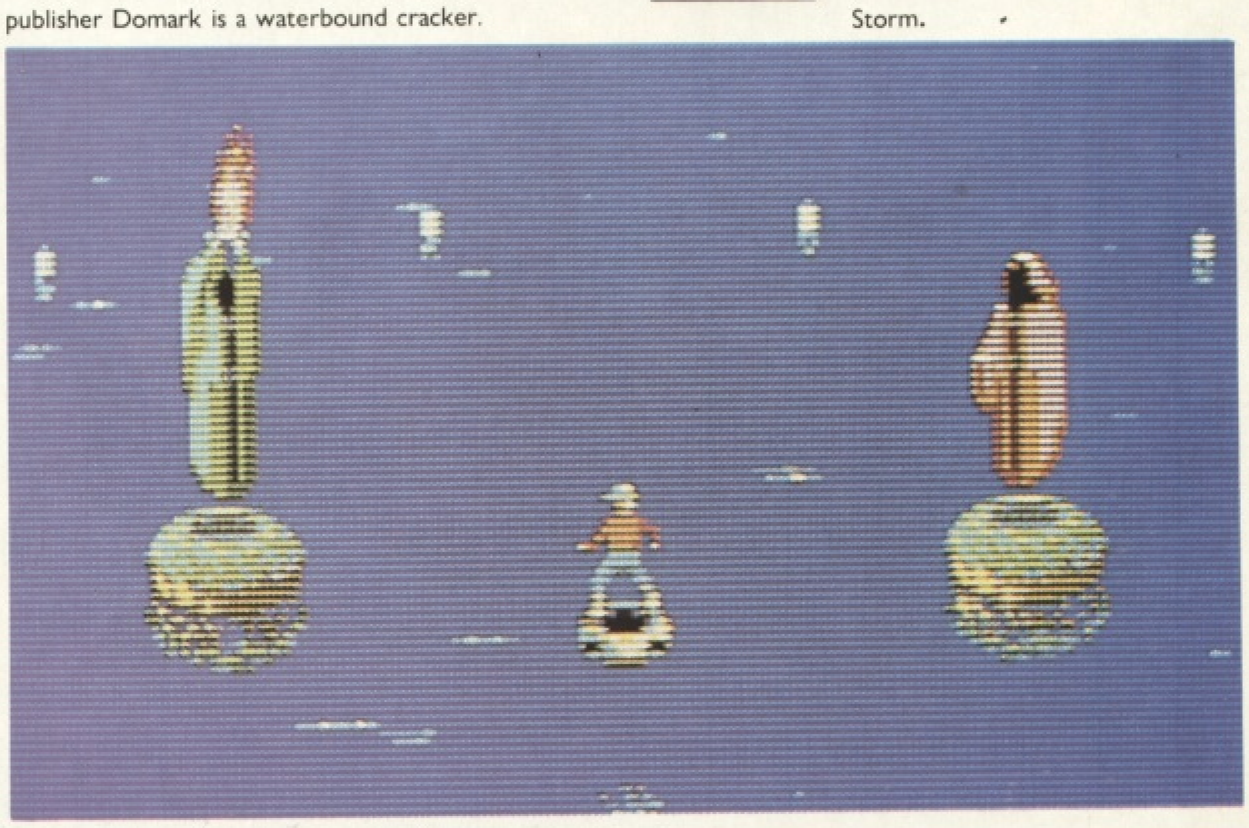
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Maps and tips for Palace's Barbarian II**, plus a helping hand for** Double Dragon, Fusion **and** LED Storm.

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The first release from veteran American software publisher Broderbund through British software publisher Domark is a waterbound cracker.





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Rainbow Arts' first release not to come through US Gold is arguably its best to date.

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Just to make life a little easier for anyone interested in entering the Populous **competition, here's a detailed guide to programming team Bullfrog Productions.**

57 COMPETITION

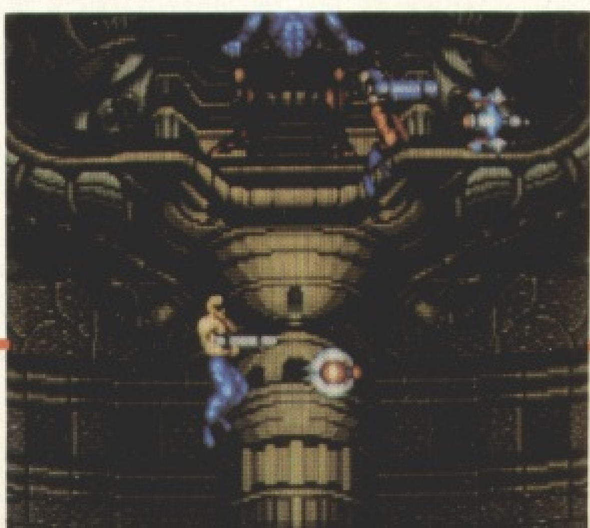
Win a holiday for two in Russia courtesy of Balance Of Power **producer Mindscape.**

80 DEMOS

Another bumper bundle of Public Domain pranks, including Kylie Minogue **(!) and** RoboCop. **Plus a doodle on Electronic Arts'** Deluxe Paint III.

30 FORGOTTEN WORLDS

Arc Developments has done US Gold proud with its conversion of Capcom's incredible coin-op.



84 ARCADES

Sega's latest is a high-rise affair as opposed to hydraulic, and SNK has thrown aside Paul and Vince in favour of more intelligent creatures in Prehistoric Isle.

90 ALTERNATIVE ENTERTAINMENT

Sea's new 16-bit console is due to hit the streets this Christmas. Will it represent an alternative or an addition to the existing 16-bit machines?

92 FEATURE

American software publisher Sierra On Line has taken its home country by storm and is about to make a significant impact over here with its unique series of adventures. Or maybe it won't... Steve Cooke examines the evidence.

98 BACKSPACE

Mindscape's Geoff Heath is in the chair answering your queries.

76 ROBOCOP

Ocean's competent conversion of the arcade game of the film.



THE ONE'S GUIDE TO PRICE, RELEASE DATE AND EVERYTHING

You may be used to reading reams of opinionated waffle elsewhere, but here we prefer to let the games speak for themselves. Relevant scenes are shown, with informative captions used to convey the 'feel' of the game in question. At the end of each review there are opinions highlighting any good and bad points, prices, release dates, and ratings where possible. Basically, there's something for everyone – at best a review, and at worst a highly detailed preview. There's nothing clever, just straightforward facts and ratings. Updates will follow where appropriate.

GRAPHICS Not necessarily how colourful or well drawn they are, but how well they fit in to the overall effect.

SOUND Again, not necessarily quantity or indeed quality of sound, but how well it's used.

PLAYBILITY How does this game feel? Is it addictive or just plain tedium?

VALUE Essentially a reflection of lasting interest – how much game do you get for your money.

OVERALL A useful point of reference – essentially a summary of the preceeding ratings.

REVIEWER ROUND-UP

GARY PENN

The software hard-guy continues his crusade against mediocre software – with the help of **Silkworm, Forgotten Worlds** and **Typhoon Thompson**.

PAUL BOUGHTON

The erstwhile C+VG Deputy Editor likes nothing better than good old fashioned arcade-style antics – provided they're not frustratingly difficult. Paul's still trying to complete UbiSoft's **Night Hunter** in between bouts of **Arkanoid**.

CIARÁN BRENNAN

Ciarán likes his action superlative rather than superfluous. To score with our Ciarán, he has to get heavily involved with the proceedings, which is why he goes for games like **Grand Monster Slam** and **Typhoon Thompson.**

BRIAN NESBITT

Leading football statistican Brian was delighted to see his favourite team, Newport County, make its telly debut. No-one's had the heart to tell him that it was because the team went out of business... **RoboCop** and **Forgotten Worlds** got Brian 'with it' this month.

GRAHAM TAYLOR

Gee Tee is a fool for thought-provoking programs – and this months its **Raffles** doing the provoking.

GARY WHITTA

The Chingford chump is into most types of game, especially shoot 'em ups and beat 'em ups and wind 'em ups. Fave raves are **Balance Of Power** and **Silkworm.**

LETTERS

LETTERS, The One, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU.

HAVE YOU TRIED IT WITH PORRIDGE?

Dear Sir,

As you can probably tell by my address, I am unable to use my ST. So why am I writing this letter to you? I would simply like to thank you for bringing out the best 16-bit magazine to date.

I knew that I'd done a good thing upgrading from the Spectrum to the ST, but I think that I've done an even better thing in getting your mag sent to me every month.

You have kept the world in touch with a remand prisoner who can't wait to get back to his ST.

Steven Crockett, HM Prison, Swansea

What can we say? The One reaches the parts that other mags can't reach!

THE RIGHT STUFF?

Dear The One,

I'm new to your magazine and would like to ask a stupid question. What does 'RE' mean in your Top Ten listings? I've figured out the rest, but his one escapes me.

I must say that I'm quite impressed with your mag. The software reviews are great, but I've found your letters section to be even more entertaining. I'm not too sure why you printed a review of the actual F-16 in the April '89 issue, though. (There are aviation magazines for that kind of stuff).

Thomas A. Murray, Middleton Cheney, Oxon

A review of the F-16? We did no such thing! Paul Boughton's feature on the US super-fighter was intended as a little extra information for the thousands who've bought flight simulators over the last few months. Oh, and by the way, RE stands for Re-Entry.

JOYSTICKS DOWN

Dear The One

I've just had a great idea! Starting from April 25, every 16-bit computer owner who purchases software on a regular basis simply stops! Lets have a strike! Spending an average £19.99 a week leaves many people (including myself) broke. So, everyone out there, put your feet up and wait until all companies lower their prices by at least £3.

Scott Wills, West Bromwich, West Midlands

Have you really thought this through Scott? You may have a case in thinking that 16-bit software is a little overpriced, but I'm not sure if a boycott is the answer (even if you could gain sufficient support). A better answer is probably to be a little more selective in your software purchasing – only buying games that you really think will justify the expenditure. Maybe if sloppy software stops selling so well then the publishers will have no choice but to pull their socks up.

BRAYBROOK BASHING

Dear Sir,

About the Amiga version of **Rainbow Islands** and Graftgold: so they have decided to port it from the ST. This is perhaps the worst advertisement they could possibly give the Amiga version.

Discovery has proved that Amiga-specific software is economically viable, so why can't BT get its act together? I would never buy an ST-ported game, whereas I would be prepared to pay extra for an Amiga-specific version – all of my Amiga-owning friends are in agreement on this.

I am therefore led to the conclusion that the Graftgold boys are lazy: they simply can't be bothered to redesign graphics or reprogram the game for the Amiga (although at least they are going to use the blitter).

To quote AB from a couple of occasions in **ZZAP! 64** (a once-wonderful Commodore 64 magazine, dear to the hearts of many of our staff members – Ed)...

"I'm also bursting to tell everyone that I've got an Amiga at last, and they're wonderful!" Issue 25, page 45.

"The ST contains just enough hardware to make it graphically superior to most 8-bits... Sonically it has a very old chip indeed... In conclusion, I would say that the Amiga to the ST is like the C64 to the Spectrum." Issue 27, page 44.

Don't get me wrong – I wouldn't want to see the back of the ST as healthy competition in the software stakes should raise the overall quality. ST porting almost killed the Amiga, and it still might kill British entertainment software support for the machine if teams such as Graftgold don't get their fingers out.

Alan Johnstone, Grizedale College, University of Lancaster

*Whew! Don't you think that you're being a little bit hard on Braybrook and Co? After all, in the **Rainbow Islands** piece, Andrew did try to explain that the reason for the port-over is purely financial. The publisher (in this case Telecomsoft) sets aside a fixed budget for game development, and if this doesn't stretch to cover the cost of the extra development time necessary to produce unique versions for each machine, then obviously compromises must be made. I'm sorry Alan, but until the Amiga's user base becomes considerably larger, you and your friends are going to have to put up with quite a few cases similar to this one. Instead of giving Andrew Braybrook such a hard time, maybe you should be thankful that a programmer of his ability is handling the ST version in the first place.*

TONGUES IN CHEEKS

Dear the One,

Thank you for your assistance on **Dragon's lair**. My whole family wanted to see the final 'snog', and we all waited – but in vain. There were no waggling tongues in the final conflict. Thank you so much for winding us all up.

Mark A Polatajko, Motherwell

You're welcome!

BACKCHAT

Dear Sir,

I was wondering if you sold back issues of your magazines. I am interested in Issue Three (the one with the **Elite** cheat in it for the Atari). At what price would it be?

Nik Dixon, Leigh on Mendip, Bath

Don't you read this magazine? Every month we print the address for our back issues department on the Contents pages. Why do we bother?

GRAPHIC DETAILS

Dear Sir,

Could I pick your brains? I have got a few questions for you, could you answer them? By the way, I own an Amiga. 1. How do I make a sprite? 2. How do I animate a sprite? 3. How can I get access to the 4,096 colours through basic?

Mark Pincher, Palmersville, Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

I don't know Mark – but I know a man who does. From our next issue onwards Phil South is contributing a regular feature on computer graphics in games – how to originate them, and what to do with them. Any other queries of this type should be addressed to Phil at the usual address.

SEXIST? MOI?

Dear Editor,

I am writing to you about the subject of sexism in software. By now most of your readers will have skipped to the next letter, but I think it's a serious problem (as serious as racism) and warrants some discussion.

That there is a problem with sexism in software is, I think, undisputed – your review of **Emmanuelle** states as much. But why does nobody do anything about it? You may not consider it your job, but then whose job is it? Surely we must each work within our realm to combat this problem, and all of you at The One have a great responsibility in that you can choose not to review a game.

Rather than ignore the problem, why don't you take a stand and be the first non-sexist computer magazine? I'm not asking you to censor all games, just those that are offensive. I'm sure you wouldn't review any of the new German facist and racist games.

Rather than harm your readership, a boycott of sexist software may enhance it instead. At least it would show programmers that we would rather they expend energy in creating original and excellent games (**Populous** for example) instead of relying on offensive and sexist ideas for games.

*Point taken, but you can hardly argue that Graham Taylor's review of **Emmanuelle** went any way towards promoting sexist software – in fact it probably did quite the opposite. Of course we're selective in what we review in these pages and will continue to be, but you must also remember that what's sexist to one person may just be harmless fun to another.*



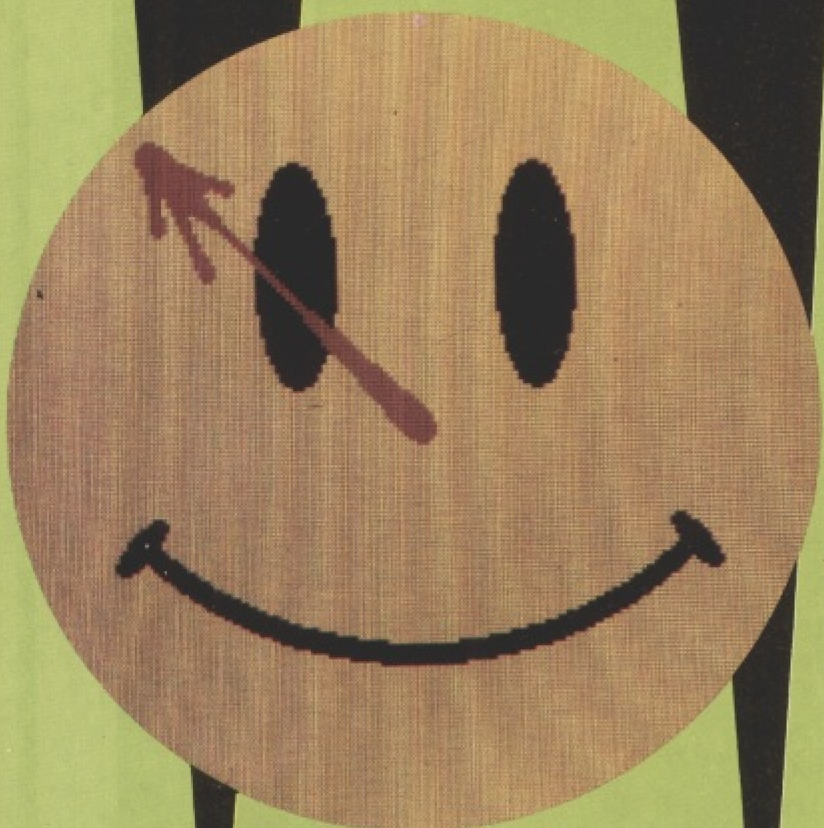
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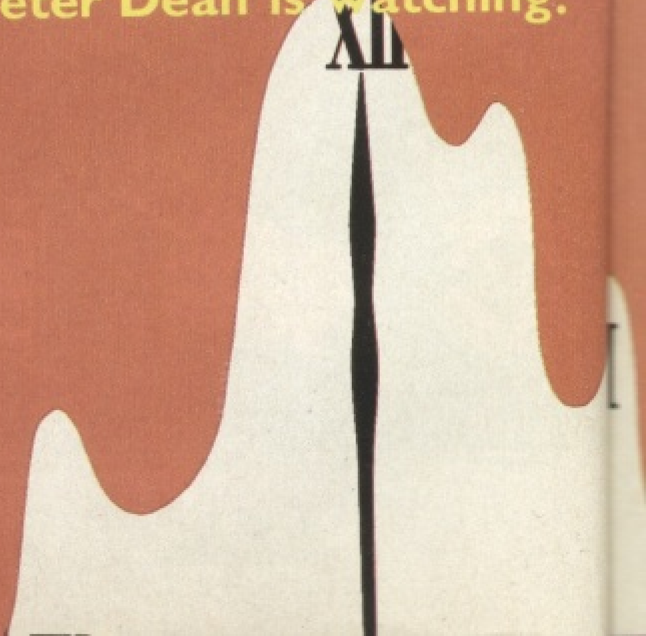
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WHO'S WA

WATC

Almost from the moment that it first appeared, Alan Moore's meister-work graphic novel seemed destined to make it to the silver screen. Speculation flourished – will Schwarzenegger play Dr Manhattan? – but mostly with no basis in fact. But now it seems that the ink is finally dry on the director's con-tract, and the name it spells is Terry Gilliam. Peter Dean is watching.





Trying to locate Terry Gilliam in his Highgate home is almost like part of a bizarre quest in one of his feature films. Outside the dominating Georgian facade, a woman wheeling a sick-covered infant next to a gargantuan Irish wolfhound directs me to a little alley.

"Walk down those stairs and press the bell marked Poo-Poo Pictures," she says matter-of-factly. A creaking staircase takes me up into darkness until a huger poster, showing a man about to meet his fate care of a drill in the forehead, signals that madness is at large. And it certainly is.

Underneath a large, animated, slavering mouth – hung from the rafters of this converted attic – sits an impish Gilliam, surrounded by artefacts and props from his days as a **Monty Python** animator and film director. There's the **Jabberwocky** in one corner, the suspended cage from **Time Bandits**, and the King of the Moon from **Baron Munchausen**. There's also a discreet blood-stained Smiley badge pinned to his shirt.

Gilliam's been getting a hard time of it lately, what with Munchausen's inflated budget, but you can hardly tell – the more serious the subject the more he giggles. The more conversation dwells on the fantastic the more he looks intense, hatching, no doubt, some weird and wonderful scheme.

His wayward conversation is like the plot of one of his films – it knows where it's headed in a simple, linear narrative, but is halted abruptly by the appearance of bizarre and wonderful notions. For example, a chat about **Munchausen** is punctuated with brilliant insights into work past, present and future such as: "**Brazil** was actually a simple story – boy meets girl, boy get tortured!"

The man is unique and his personality is clearly stamped on anything he touches – and vice versa. Art imitating life, indeed.

"The main character in my films is always, in one form or another, me. I always become totally absorbed by the main character, and the weird thing is that the films have lots in common with the reality that they're taking place in," he giggles.

Brazil's nightmare world of red tape mirrored the legal battle Gilliam underwent with Universal to get the film released, with Robert De Niro playing his Publicity-generating part as though he were still Tuttle. The problems which befell the Baron in **Munchaeusen** were occuring in real life – the shooting of the Baron's death scene being on the day when Gilliam was told to leave the movie without having finished it.

With such uncanny movie/reality switching, Gilliam is a brave man indeed to take on **Watchmen** as his next movie project. Fantasy fans everywhere can celebrate the fact that Gilliam is to direct Alan Moore's classic but what of Gilliam? Will he be Rorschach?

"Oh yes!", he giggles uncontrollably. "Well actually I'm a bit of all of them. That's what I like about **Watchmen**. I know all of those characters very well, and I can identify with everyone, but Rorschach is the one nearest and dearest to my... GUT!" he says menacingly.

At the time of speaking, Gilliam was waiting for confirmation of the budget which will ultimately dictate whether he will direct the film or not, but amber lights were clearly going green, with Gilliam hoping for a September start to shooting.

One of the most exciting aspects of the projects is the producer – action man Joel Silver is notorious for making audiences writhe and gasp. Among his more recent credits are **Die Hard, Predator, Lethal Weapon** and **48 HRS**. The Gilliam/Silver mix should be explosive and will certainly give Gilliam the tough edge necessary to bring out **Watchmen's** pace and harder edge.

ATCHING THE HME



Behind every superhero there's a great film director and writer: (left) Terry Gilliam and (below) Alan Moore.

Alan Moore has so far not been involved because, as Gilliam puts it: "He had no control over the thing, he was just the guy hired by DC to do the stuff so it had gone out of his hands." He also says that Moore washed his hands of the project but has expressed interest in getting involved now that Gilliam is first choice for the director's chair.

The script as it now exists, is written by Sam Hamm and, unavoidably, has cut out most of the time juxtapositions. But, sensing Gilliam's passion for the subject, it's possible that these will creep back in as the project progresses.

"That's what really intrigues me, and it isn't in the script at the moment. I also like the juxtapositions where you get a voiceover – someone talking while something else is happening – everything is blending together all the time. The script is very straightforward and I think it's lost a lot of the texture of the thing, but I think that's got to get back in," he says.

Because of the early stage of development, there are other uncertainties – for example, who will play Rorschach? Rumours are flying that James Woods will get the part, and one would have thought his style of creating an emotional uncertainty within the filmgoer would be ideal (see **Best Seller** for a good example), but Mickey Rourke is also a name which is getting linked to the project on the Tinsel Town grapevine. As for that old chestnut about Arnold Schwarzenegger playing Dr Manhattan, Gilliam throws it right out of court saying he doesn't know where that rumour started.

So who is **Watchmen** going to be pitched at, kids or adults? "I don't know," Gilliam continues, "I'm just going to do the comic book. I don't know who that audience is really. I've seen them at comic conventions and they look like adults to me. Who's **RoboCop** aimed at? I don't know – it's a very intelligent, funny film and it's also very violent – it works on all sorts of levels."

Terry Gilliam's intensely visual style of direction and love of architecture and period costumes, coupled with what can be described as a comic book style of narration in the fantasy genre, certainly bodes well for the project as does his baulking at the rational side of life, and targetting films at specific audiences. With an artist of Gilliam's calibre, **Watchmen's** animation will be made flesh.

The most important thing is that Gilliam loves **Watchmen** with a passion, and movie-making to him, after all, is all about trying to re-create the original mental images he has in his head.

"Films are like that, they plant this seed in your brain and over the years it grows into this incredible world. So, then I go around trying to re-create the image I've got in my head."

But what if Alan Moore's world and the **Watchmen** characters seep over into reality too much, as has already happened with Gilliam's previous films? There might just be a sudden exodus of residents from the Highgate area – on account of a bizarre, movie director seen wandering the cold, wind-swept streets alone... with ink-like blotches changing on his face, in the yellow lamplight.

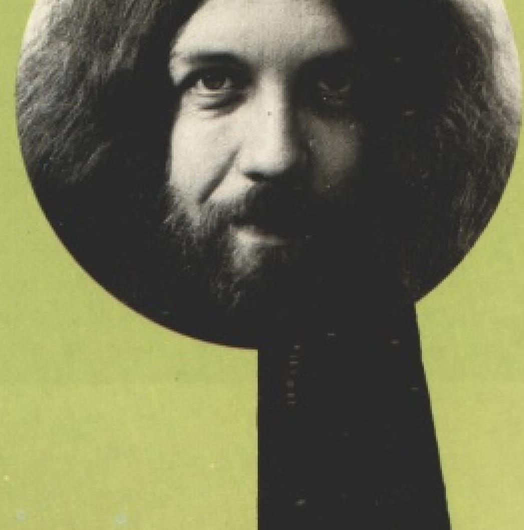
STOP PRESS...

With production finally due to start on the film, what of the licence to produce a computer interpretation of Alan Moore's classic book? According to the novel's publisher, DC, Manchester-based Ocean has already acquired the licence.

Despite this confirmation, details are very vague – including the form of game Watchmen **is likely to take. Does the licence give Ocean the freedom to use the characters in a more flexible Minutemen scenario? Or will the game closely follow the book's plot.**

Watchmen **isn't the first DC licence to appear on home computer –** Superman **and** Batman **both recently hit 16-bit, the latter arguably with greater success thanks to the involvement of Ocean and Special FX. Whether SFX is to handle the production of** Watchmen **is also unconfirmed.**

What is known is that the game is already under development, although nothing is expected for quite some time.



NEWS

● GIANT ANTS SIGHTED IN DESERT!

● BITMAP BROTHERS GO DUTCH!



MIRROR'S

There was little need for Dutch courage as award-winning 16-bit publisher Mirrorsoft chose an Amsterdam hotel to announce its product line-up for the next six months and the signing of a new affiliate label, Logotron.

Although very little was revealed that hadn't already been shown in one form or another, firm release dates were finally given for a number of long-awaited games and first glimpses were caught of some previously unannounced American product.

The main label, Image Works, kicks off in May with **Bloodwych**, a **Dungeon Master**-style adventure game for two players. This is followed in June by **Phobia**, a shoot 'em up from Tony Crowther (the man behind **Bombuzal** and **Fernandez Must Die**).

Also in June, the Bitmap Brothers reappear with **Xenon II – Megablast**, the sequel to the game that first put the Bros on the map. For more details turn to page 25.

July sees the long-awaited release of the arcade adventure set in a bottle garden – **Terrarium**.

August should finally see the release of **Interphase**, a game which first appeared as an impressive 3D scrolling routine at last year's PC show. Set in a Cyberpunk world, **Interphase** sees the player battling against the workings of an oppressive computer system in a fight to save the future of the world.

September looks likely to be the company's busiest month, with a total of three products due for release. Jon Knox's **Dynamic Debugger** is the first game to utilise the Amiga's HAM mode in a fully scrolling environment; **Palladin** is an unusual arcade adventure making extensive use of silhouetted graphics; while the long-awaited **Crime Town Depths** is an Italian science-fiction movie, Cinemaware style.

Speaking of Cinemaware, the king of the interactive movie is continuing its development of the genre with the August release of **It Came From The Desert**, a tribute to the 'aaaargh' style B-movie which was popular in the late fifties.

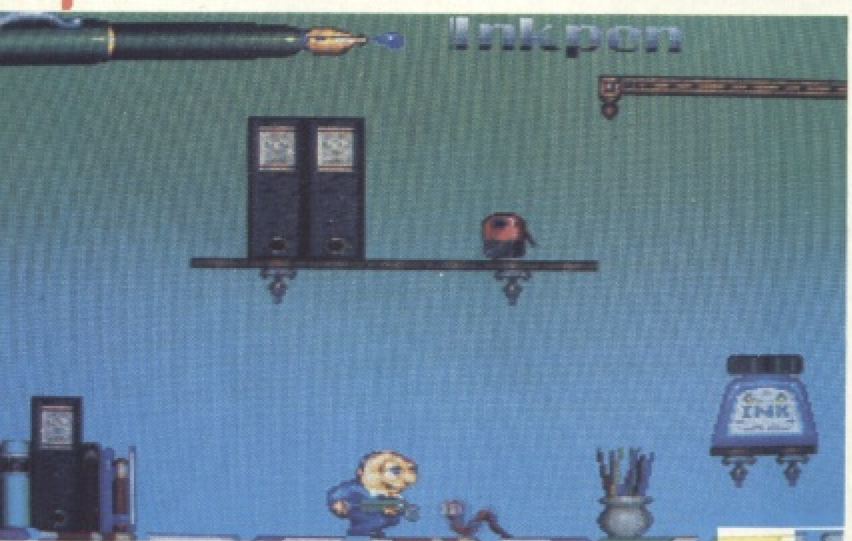
The **TV Sports** range is also expanding, with **Basketball** scheduled to appear in November – other titles are as yet unconfirmed, but should include **Baseball, Tennis** and **Boxing**.

For those who prefer their action simulated, Spectrum HoloByte hopes to follow up the enormous success of **Falcon** with two complementary mission disks – the first scheduled for June and the second for September. Coming back down to Earth, the company's next original product is a road driving simulator, **Vette**.

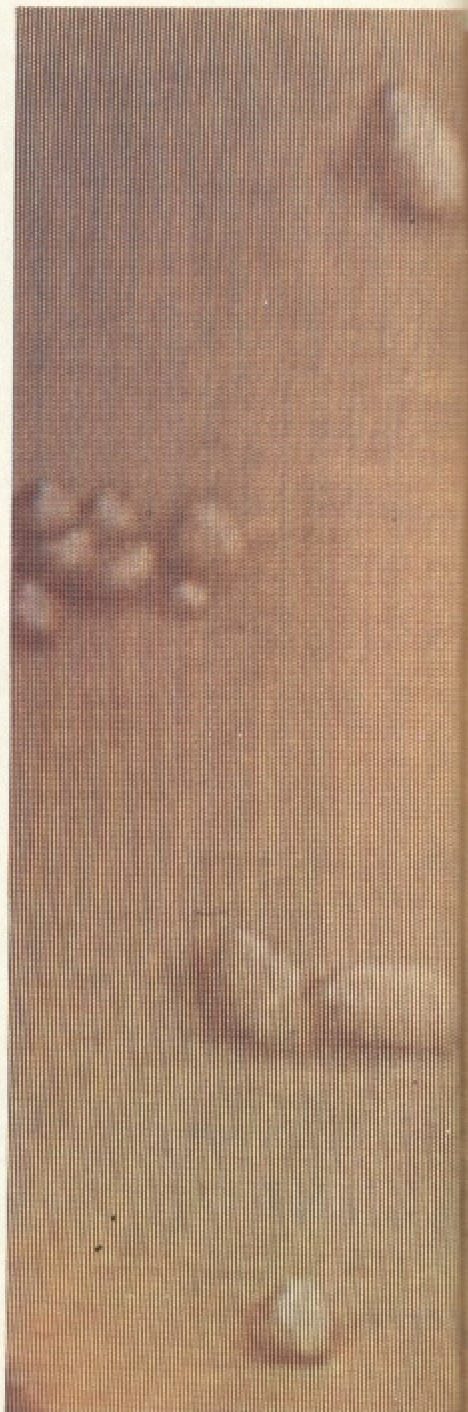
The first **Falcon** mission disk comes with an extensive manual and replaces the existing second disk. Twelve new missions are on offer – the first 11 comprising new tasks for the experienced pilot (including anti-tank manoeuvres and repulsing amphibious landing), while the final mission is an all-



Spectrum HoloByte takes to the streets of San Francisco in the PC incarnation of 'Vette.



Dynamic Debugger: **Jon Knox's smooth scrolling, 4,096 extravaganza is penned in for a September release.**





● SWITCH ON TO FOUR NEW TV SPORTS!

● A TASTY HAM SCROLL!

IMAGE

Arachnoid horror hits a small mid-west town as Cinemaware goes back to the fifties in It Came From The Desert.





Eric Matthews, Stephen Kelly and Mike Montgomery, otherwise known as the Bitmap Brothers, spoil an idyllic Amsterdam skyline with a flagrant display of out-and-out posing.



out conflict scanario combing every opposition the F-16 has come up against so far.

Vette is a simulation of America's most desirable sports car, the Corvette, set in an accurate San Franciscan streetscape. The PC version is due to appear in August, with the ST and Amiga following in November.

Strange silhouetted graphics complement a supernatural storyline in Palladin, **Image Works' arcade adventure due out in September.**

Newly-signed affiliate label, Logotron continues its tradition of giving new slants to classic game concepts with two new products – **Eye Of Horus** and **Star Blaze**.

The former is a 45-location arcade adventure set in the time of the pharoahs (which is said to follow a genuine Egyptian legend to the letter) while **Star Blaze** is a three dimensional variation of **Galaxians**. Written by the near-legendary Denton Designs, **Eye Of Horus** is slated for a June release with **Star Blaze** following in August.

War gamers are catered for too with the announcement of two strategy games, **Waterloo** and **Conflict Europe**, both on the PSS label. **Waterloo** is intended for an April release and allows the player to take the part of either Napoleon or Nelson in a recreation of the historic 1815 encounter.

A more modern scenario is offered in the eagerly awaited 16-bit incarnation of PSS' 8-bit classic **Theatre Europe**. **Conflict Europe** (scheduled for a June release) attempts to simulate a horror too great to contemplate – World War III.

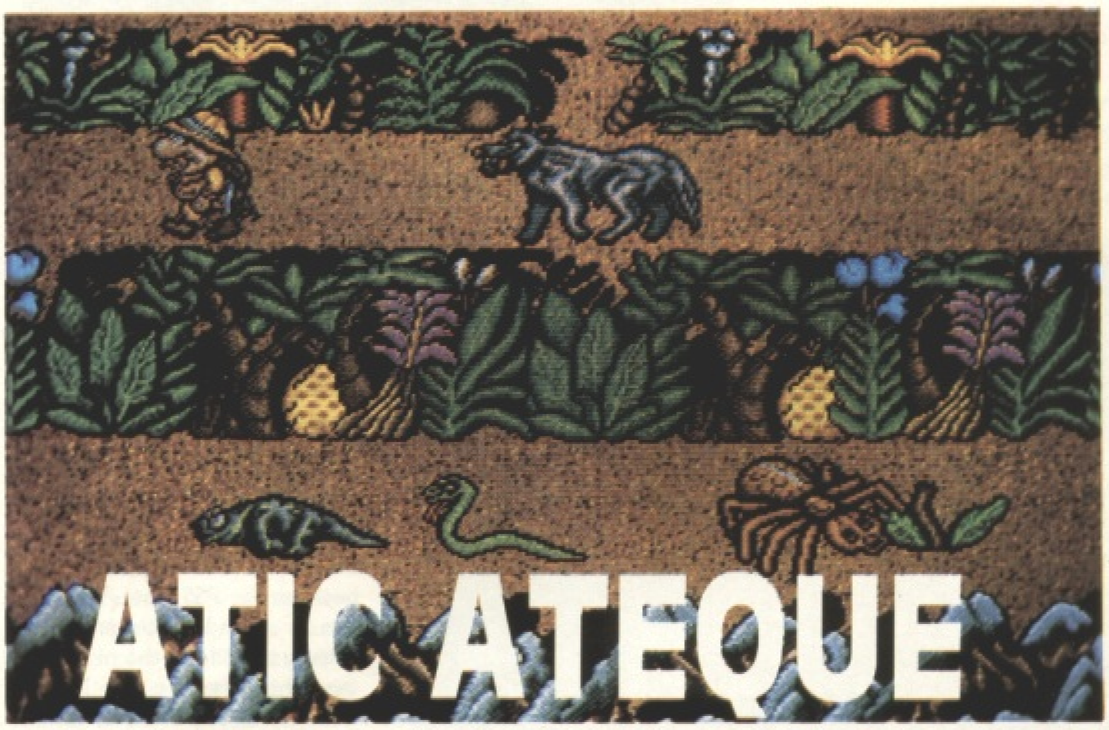
The only real bad news to slip into this massive announcement is the final confirmation that FTL will definitely not develop a version of **Dungeon Master** for the Amiga A500. there are no firm plans either for an Amiga **Oids**, but work is proceeding on **Chaos Strikes Back** (a new **Dungeon Master** scenario disk, due out in May) and **Dungeon Master II**, which is moving steadily towards a release early next year.



Take to the fields of France to enact the historic 1815 encounter in PSS' April release, Waterloo.

NEWS

● SCHWARZENEGGER ON THE RUN!
● SABREMAN CUT LOOSE!



The (nearly) finished Amiga version. As in Teque's previous effort Pac-Mania, **full screen overscan graphics are the order of the day, and the sizes of the backdrops and sprites have been increased to suit.**

Sabre Wulf, the first of Ultimate's latterday Spectrum classics to be converted to 16-bit via Krisalis is nearing completion. The five-year old flick-screen arcade adventure stars the intrepid explorer (and cult computer celebrity) Sabreman in a mission to retrieve the pieces of a shattered magical amulet lost in the jungles of Africa.

The conversion is being handled by Krisalis' in-house programming team Teque, who handled the conversions of **Pac-Mania** and **Blasteroids**. Teque frontmen Shaun Hollingworth and Peter Harrap have spent just over a month on **Sabre Wulf**, and if that sounds like a mercifully short time, it's due to Shaun and Pete's novel conversion method – instead of re-writing from scratch and running the risk of losing the original's feel, they take the original Z80 source code and dump it up to the Amiga's 68000 processor! Then all that needs to be done is to beef up to 16-bit standards the rudimentary 8-colour graphics and single-channel sound – a task handled by graphic artist Mark Edwards and sound man Ben Daglish.

The Amiga is the most advanced of the four versions under development – apart from adjustments to several gameplay faults that still remain, the addition of sound and general tidying up, it's all but complete and Ultimate has already approved it in its current state. The Amiga and ST versions are scheduled for release in the Summer at £19.95, with the PC following soon after.

The next Ultimate title scheduled for 16-Bit stardom is the ground-breaking isometric arcade adventure **Knight Lore**. Work will begin once Sabre Wulf is complete, and Teque will be using the same 'dump it out and beef it up' technique. Hopefully it'll be ready in time for a Christmas release. After that what's next is up to Ultimate, but the smart money is on the platform-based arcade spectacular **Underwurlde**.

Ultimate aside, between now and Christmas Teque has its hands full with a plethora of other conversion projects – **Continental Circus** for Virgin, Domark's **Xybots**, the recently-confirmed mirrorsoft licence of Sega's tennis coin-op **Passing Shot** (that should be ready to coincide with Wimbledon) and two Krisalis titles – 2000AD's **Rogue Trooper** and a secret sports licence that the boys are keeping quiet about – for the moment.



UP 'N' RUNNING

Grandslam's computer versions of the Arnold Schwarzenegger movie The Running Man **have at last got off the starting block. Released on ST, Amiga and PC this month at £19.99 apiece, the horizontally scrolling beat 'em up sees Ben Richards fighting for his life against rabid dogs and the four adversaries seen in the film. A novel 'puzzle' provides a welcome change between levels.**

TOP TEN
(Month Ending April '89)

COMMODORE AMIGA

Pos	Last	Title
1	NE	R-TYPE (Electric Dreams)
2	2	FALCON (Spectrum HoloByte/Mirrorsoft)
3	2	SWORD OF SODAN (Discovery)
4	NE	BALLISTIX (Psyclapse)
5	1	TV SPORTS FOOTBALL (Cinemaware/Mirrorsoft)
6	NE	WAR IN MIDDLE EARTH (Melbourne House)
7	NE	KRISTAL (Addictive)
8	NE	DENARIS (Rainbow Arts)
9	5	SUPER HANG-ON (Electric Dreams)
10	NE	BAAL (Psyclapse)

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REVIEW BY MICROPROSE

Tangled Tales™

The Misadventures of a Wizard's Apprentice

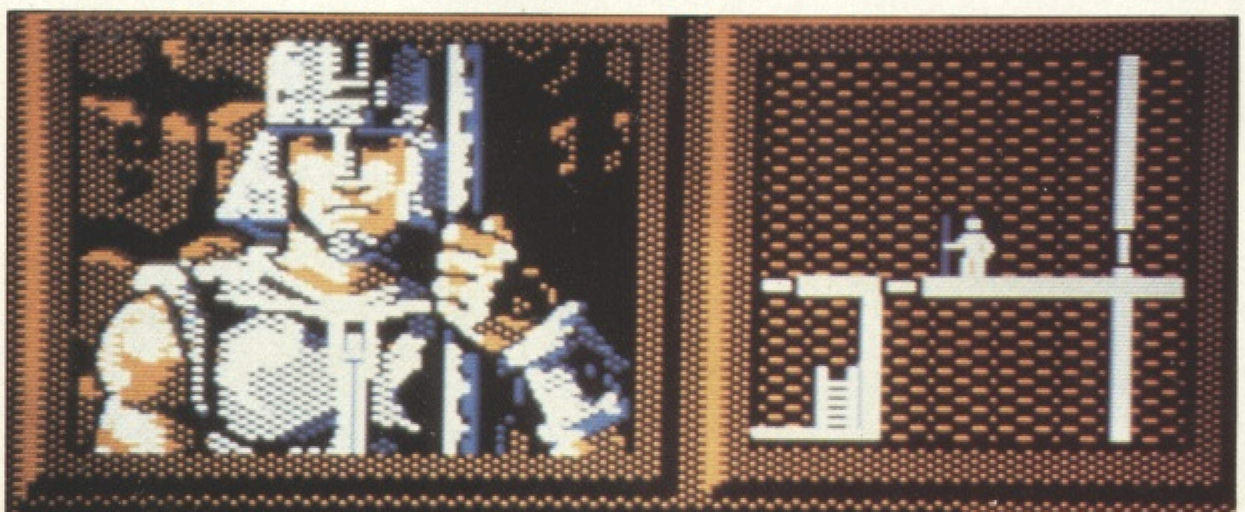
Within this lighthearted and witty fantasy role-playing adventure, Origin have cast the player in the role of a wizard's apprentice embarking on an excursion into an outlandish world of adventure and surprise.

You play the part of a struggling apprentice wizard who is given three progressively difficult tasks by his master, Eldritch, in order to become fully qualified as a wizard. You start off with no magical powers whatsoever but, as you progress through the game, you will come across haunted houses, medieval fortresses and contemporary country farms. Along the way, you will pick up spells and potions that enable you to progress further through the adventure.

The screen is divided into three sections. As you explore, the upper right window displays a dynamic map of your surroundings. The upper left window shows what is visible to you; another character, a monster, a building, forest, etc. On entering dungeons, this window will present a moving 3-D view of your surroundings. Finally, the lower half of the screen contains a text window and control icons. This may sound complicated but provides you with a great deal of valuable information without making the screen unnecessarily cluttered.

While exploring, you will meet up with other inhabitants, each with a unique personality. Some may wish to join you in your travels, but each one will do so for a different reason. Each companion is totally autonomous; he or she will decide when he joins, how he fights (if at all), when he will provide clues and when he leaves. Some are essential if you are to succeed in achieving your ultimate goal, others may simply hinder your progress. You will come up against problems that might present the solution almost there and then, others might have you racking your brains for days until you come across some other little piece of information whilst solving another puzzle that will enable you to go back and solve the original problem.





Origin's Tangled Tales comes as a breath of fresh air amongst many long-winded and drawn out adventures – after all, how many other adventures allow you to build a snowman? The emphasis within the game is to involve you in a lot of problem solving, not force you to spend 80% of your time travelling around the land simply looking for the relevant places. This, combined with the pretty graphics and easy to use icon controller, make for an entertaining (not a word that is often used within fantasy RPG adventures) pioneering fantasy/adventure.

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NEWS

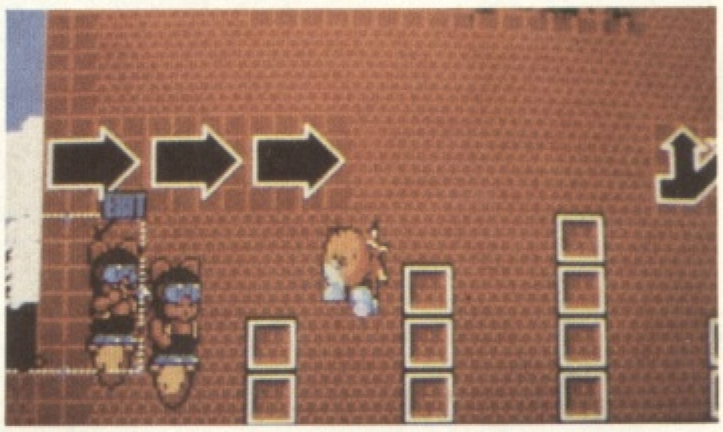
- KILLING FOR CASH!
- CREATURES FROM HELL

OCEAN'S LATEX LICENCE

After **Red Heat, The Untouchables** and **Bat-Man: The Movie**, Ocean has acquired its fourth film licence of the year. Currently being shot at Pinewood Studios, **Nightbreed** is the cinema adaptation of Clive 'Hellraiser' Barker's best-selling fantasy novel Cabal.

So far only 40 per cent of the movie (which stars David Cronenberg) has been filmed but it's already being described as the biggest ever 'creature' movie with over 200 monsters, and promises some spectacular make-up special effects.

Impact Software, the team behind **Run The Gauntlet**, has already started work on the game, a multi-level mix of different gameplay styles, and has already paid visits to Pinewood to watch filming in progress. Ocean claims that this is one of the first film tie-ins where the software publisher has total co-operation from the film's producer, in this case 20th Century Fox.



Cute platform and ladders laughs in Taito's New Zealand Story**, due to appear on 16-bit around June.**

Ocean hopes to have **Nightbreed** finished in time for a Christmas release – to coincide with the UK premiere of the movie.

On a cuter note, Ocean has also acquired the licensing rights to Taito's recently-released coin-op **The New Zealand Story**, bringing the number of Ocean/Taito tie-ins to three in as many months.

The coin-op is a cutesy levels 'n' ladders based shoot 'em up that casts the player as a heroic Kiwi battling against an army of teddies to rescue his feathered chums from the clutches of an evil Walrus! Ocean's 30-strong in-house programming team is beavering away on the conversion, and will hopefully have completed it by June.



One of the four huge scrolling levels found in Psygnosis' Blood Money.

IT'S A GAS

An above-average quota of destruction and mayhem is promised as shoot 'em up specialist Psygnosis continues its attack on the genre with the release of **Blood Money**, written by DMA Designs (the team behind the company's previous blaster, Menace).

In 'a quest for gold and glory', one or two players battle along four scrolling levels, tackling the first as choppers, the second as submarines, the third as jetpackers and the fourth in super sleek spaceships.



WHO'S BAD?

Ocean's conversions of Data East's coin-op Bad Dudes Versus Dragon Ninja **have finally hit the shelves. The horizontally scrolling beat 'em up has you attempting to rescue President Ronnie from the clutches of the Dragon Ninja. ST and Amiga versions are both out now at £19.95 and £24.95 respectively.**

TOP TEN

(Month Ending April '89)

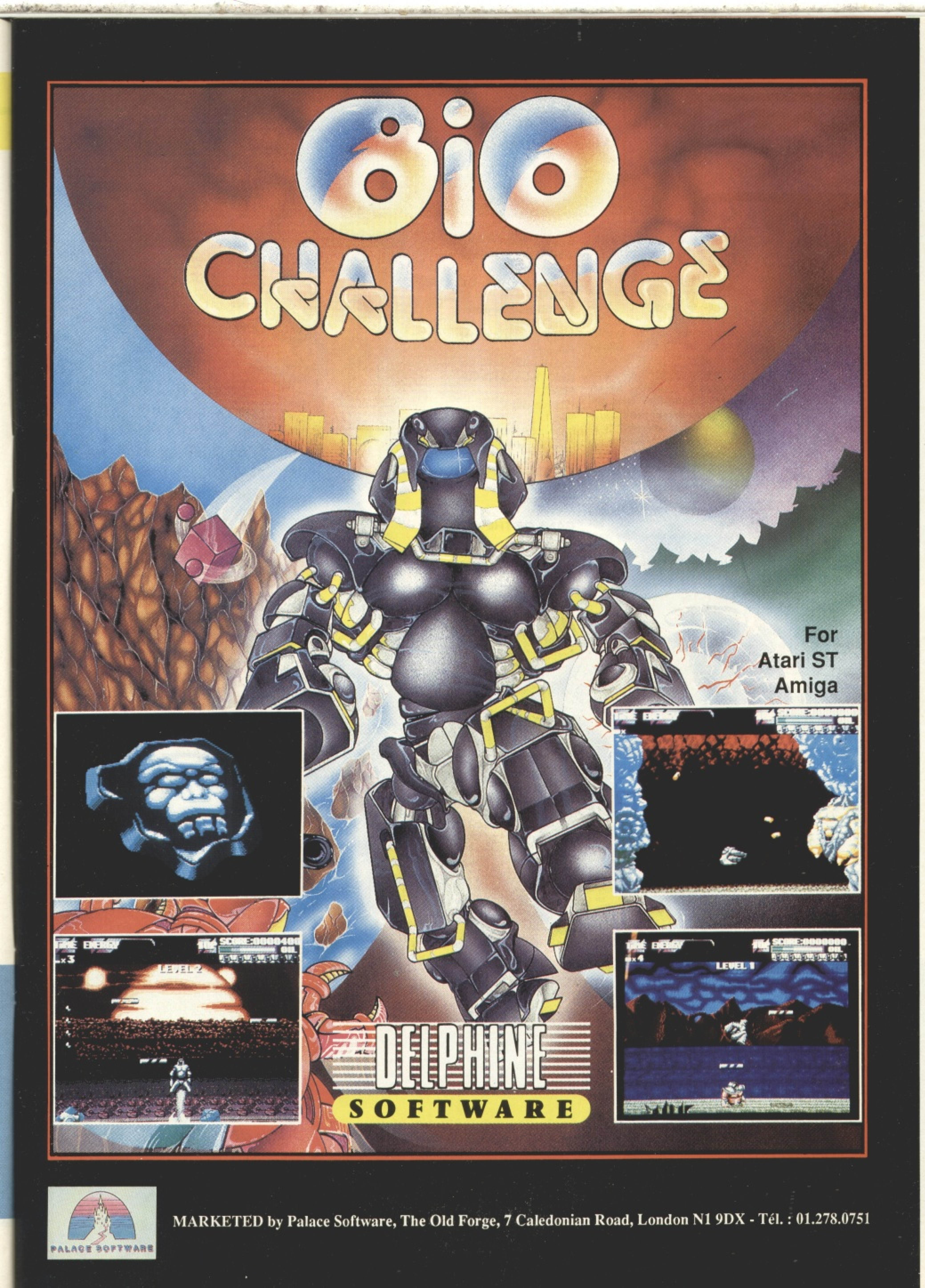
ATARI ST

1	NE	F-16 COMBAT PILOT (Digital Integration)
2	NE	WAR IN MIDDLE EARTH (Melbourne House)
3	1	FALCON (Spectrum HoloByte/ Mirrorsoft)
4	4	BARBARIAN II (Palace)
5	NE	BALLISTIX (Psyclapse)
6	7	KINGS QUEST TRIPLE PACK (Sierra/Activision)
7	4	EMPIRE (Interstel/Electronic Arts)
8	NE	KINGS QUEST IV (Sierra/Activision)
9	NE	ZAK McKRACKEN AND THE ALIEN MINDBENDERS (Lucasfilm)
10	NE	SPEEDBALL (ImageWorks)

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Straight in at the top of the tree: Digital Integration's **F-16 Combat Pilot.**


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Atari ST
Amiga
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NEWS



GOLDEN JOYSTICKS

Ancient tuxedos and bow-ties were taken out of storage on April 6th as London's Kensington Roof Gardens played host to EMAP's prestigious Golden Joystick Awards.

This year EMAP's four computer titles – C&VG, Sinclair User, Commodore User and The One – sponsored this prestigious event, attended by all sizes of industry cheese and the celebrity host – a DJ recently voted Radio Personality Of The Year – Capital Radio's Chris Tarrant.

Few surprises were thrown up in the 16-bit categories, but for the record the results were as follows (runners-up are in brackets):

BEST GRAPHICS
Rocket Ranger
(Starglider II)
BEST SOUNDTRACK
International Karate +
(Starglider II)
PROGRAMMER OF THE YEAR
The Bitmap Brothers
(John Phillips)
BEST SIMULATION
Falcon
(Interceptor)
BEST ADVENTURE
FISH!
(Corruption)
BEST COIN-OP/ CONVERSION
Operation Wolf
(Pac-Mania)
SOFTWARE HOUSE OF THE YEAR
Mirrorsoft
(Ocean)
GAME OF THE YEAR
Speedball
(Starglider II)

BON APPETIT

So there you are, playing away on your PC into the wee small hours when your stomach screams 'FOOD!' But wait. Put down that copy of The Delia Smith Scoff Book and instead load **Bon Appetit**, input the contents of your fridge or pantry and rustle up any one of a list of mouthwatering recipes based on available ingredients. Unexpected guests? **Bon Appetit** adjusts the quantities accordingly.

Bon Appetit is a scoff-sational compuer cookbook produced by America's leading food magazine of the same name in conjunction with Pinpoint Publishing, and is available for the PC and compatibles at a price of £39.95 from Software Circus. Telephone 01 436 2811 for further details.





IT'S A BLAST

US Gold's long awaited ST and Amiga conversions of the Atari coin-op Roadblasters **have now hit the streets. There's plenty of racing and blasting fun to be had for £19.99, although fans of the original are those most likely to be impressed.**

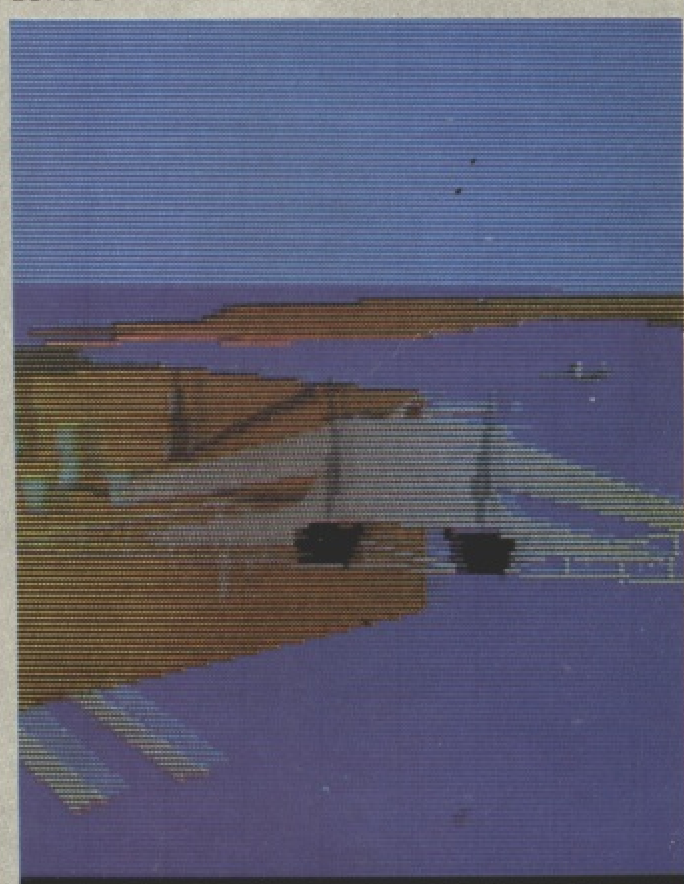
TOP TEN

(Month Ending April '89)

IBM PC AND COMPATIBLES

Pos	Last	Title
1	NE	JET FIGHTER (Velocity/Paperlogic)
2	6	KINGS QUEST IV (Sierra/Activision)
3	1	LEISURE SUIT LARRY GOES LOOKING FOR LOVE (Sierra/Activision)
4	NE	F-16 COMBAT PILOT (Digital Integration)
5	9	FLIGHT SIMULATOR III (Microsoft/SubLogic)
6	2	F-19 STEALTH FIGHTER (Microprose)
7	NE	SIDEWINDER (Mastertronic)
8	NE	ECHELON (Access Software)
9	NE	TRACON (Wesson)
10	7	POLICE QUEST II (Sierra/Activision)

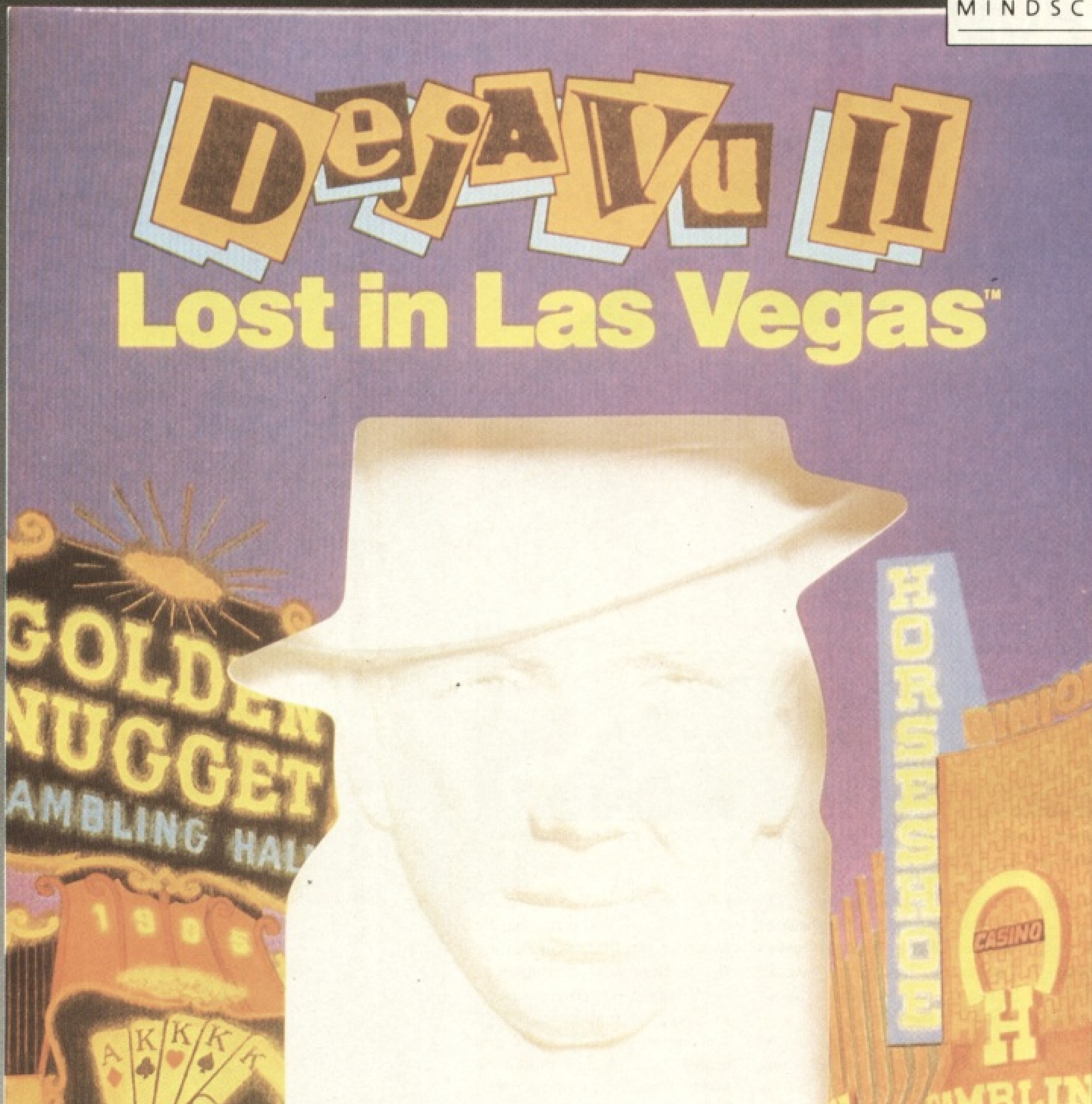
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Bob Dinnerman's simsational **Jet Fighter** hits the top spot.

Play it again Sam

MINDSCAPE INC



For the



Amiga · Atari ST · PC · Apple IIGS · Macintosh.

Welcome to the world of Déjá Vu—and to Las Vegas, the city that never sleeps – the city of excitment! Actually, you've already had plenty of excitment in the last 24 hours.

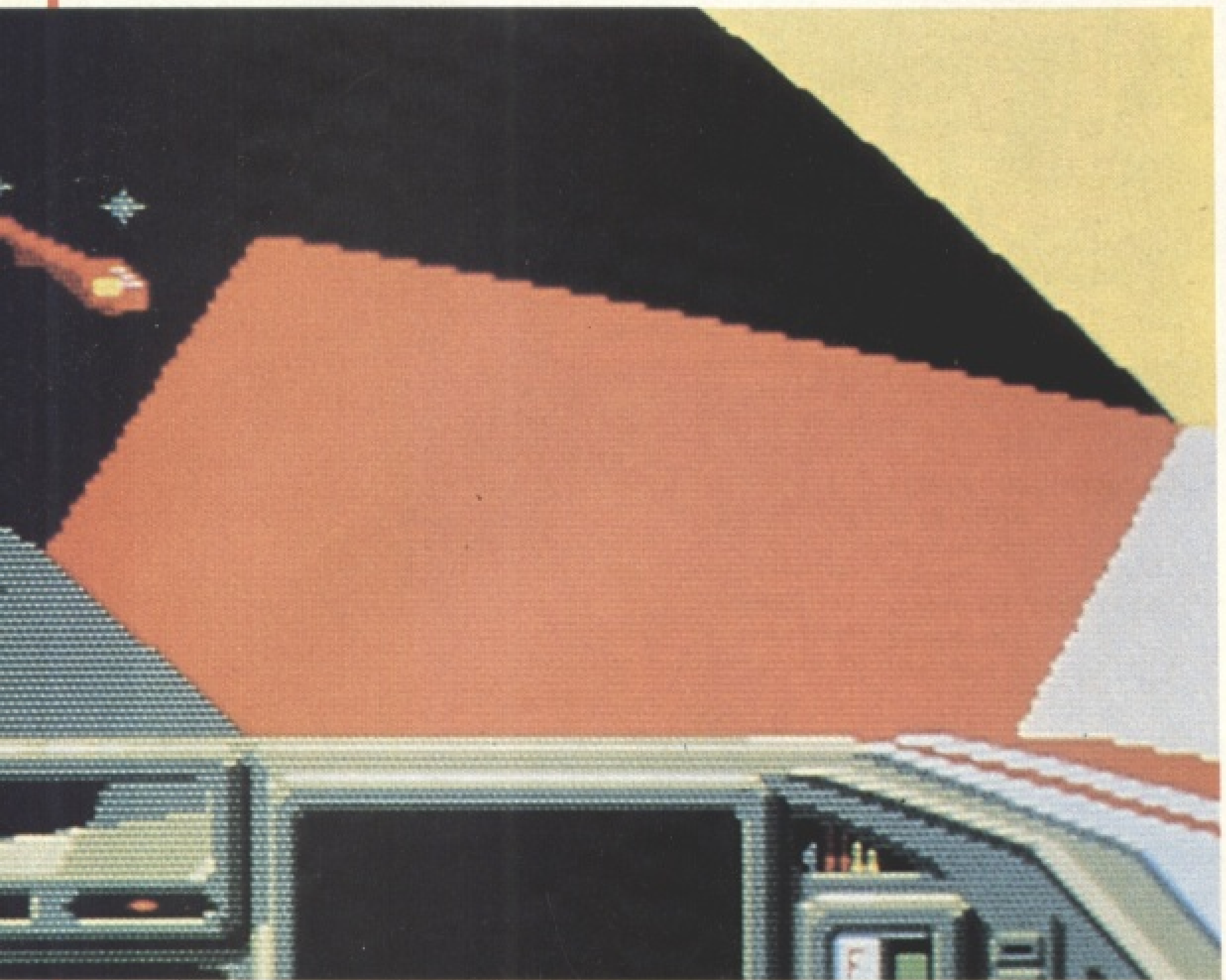
You've been abducted by two thugs from Chicago, grilled by the notorious Las Vegas mobster, Tony Malone, knocked senseless, and tossed into a bathtub in a cheap Vegas hotel.

It couldn't possibly get any worse than this – or could it?!

M I N D S C A P E

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AMIGA POWER



Electronic Arts' futuristic race game Powerdrome, now up and running on Amiga, with PC to follow.

Six months after the release of the ST original, Electronic Arts' Amiga version of the futuristic race game **Powerdrome** is now complete.

This version is visually very similar, and sports a few extra sound effects – especially with a 1Mb machine. There are some extra pictures, too... a victory sequence is shown when you win a race or a championship.

Another advantage is that Amiga **Powerdrome** owners can link up via a null modem to either another Amiga or an ST-owning opponent. But best of all programmer Michael Powell has made plenty of tweaks based on criticism made about the ST incarnation.

The over-sensitivity of the control was Steve Jarratt's bone of contention in his review made in Issue Two. Ever eager to please, Michael has included a Learning Mode for anyone having problems with getting into the ST version. Now you can alter the sensitivity and speed of the craft, which means you can fly around the track without hardly touching the mouse, increasing the sensitivity as you improve.

Michael is currently working on PC **Powerdrome**, which will support CGA, EGA and hopefully VGA and should be ready in six months time. While he's doing this, he's putting together his next game, likely to be another solid filled 3D game – "but it won't be a race game," Michael confirms, "this one's going to involve more combat."

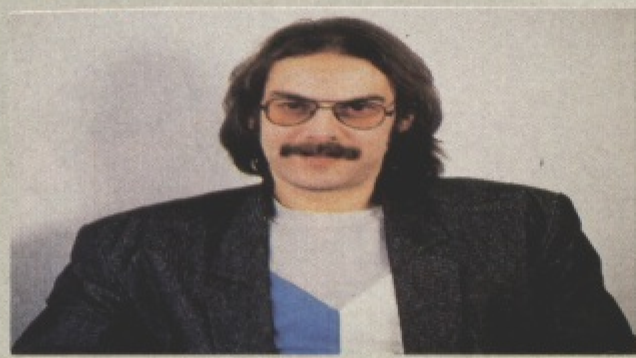
FANCY A BYTE?



Microdeal's Amiga interpretation of Columbia's vampire movie Fright Night **is out, coinciding with the UK cinema release of the film's sequel. The player runs around a house biting necks to the eerie strains of David Whittaker jingles. The ST version won't be released until late June at the same price as the Amiga – £19.99.**

SHORT STORIES

A brief guide to forthcoming releases, delayed projects and work in progress.



► A contagious little number is due to materialise from **Virgin Mastertronic** towards the end of the year ... entitled **Infection.** It's a computer board game for one to four players, superficially similar to **Othello** but with many a novel twist. A price is yet to be announced.

► The 16-bit conversions of **Sega's** bumpy buggy ride **Power Drift,** are supposedly looking 'brilliant', which probably isn't far short of the truth, as the man currently doing a good deed is **ZZKJ** (who produced the breathtaking ST and Amiga conversions of Sega's **Super Hang-On** for **Electric Dreams**). Unfortunately **Activision** isn't going to release them until around Christmas time!

► **Novagen's** sequel to **Mercenary** – the filled-3D arcade adventure **Damocles,** featured in Issue Three – now won't appear until the beginning of June ... at the earliest! A spokesman says that programmer **Paul Woakes** has effectively finished the job, but: "there's still loads of object data to input."

► After considerable delay, **Palace Software's** Amiga version of **Barbarian II** is now complete and ready for release in May. Also floundering in the same boat was sister label **Outlaw's Shoot 'Em Up Construction Kit** (reviewed in Issue Two) ... but now it's complete (ie: all bugs are ironed out and the accompanying demos are finished), so expect to see something soon. An ST version should be ready for the late summer.

► **Gremlin's Ultimate Golf** was originally featured in our first issue and should have seen the light of shop earlier this year. However due to a major shake-up of its programming team (!), the game won't make it onto the tee-off until September.

Contd Page 20


IT IS THE YEAR 2019
"The Running Man" is a deadly game that no-one had ever survived. But ..... Schwarzenegger has yet to play.
The Running Man is an action packed, sideways parallax scrolling game in 5 sections with some spectacular backdrops and impressive sound.
Look out for The Running Man Video by Braveworld. Available in all leading Video Libraries from March 21st.
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AMIGA SHOT
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AVAILABLE ON:
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C64 & AMSTRAD CPC CASSETTES £9.95
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From Page 18

▶ It looks as though **US Gold's** conversion of **Capcom's Ghouls 'n' Ghosts** could beat **Elite's** conversion of the original **Ghosts 'n' Goblins** to the street ... **Bionic Commandos** converter **Software Creations** is currently applying the finishing touches for a proposed release around August. Elite's conversion of Ghosts 'n' Goblins on the other hand, should appear in July. According to a spokesperson, the original programmer found the task too demanding and gave up!

▶ Still with Elite, one of the Birmingham-based publisher's better-known conversions has been pedalling around since the middle of last year, but at last the ST version of **Atari's** classic coin-op **Paper Boy** is almost finished for a June release, with an Amiga version breathing down its neck. Finally, good news for fans of Super Joe Crack ... **Capcom's** vertically scrolling shoot 'em up **Commando** should appear from Elite on 16-bit in time for this year's PC Show in September.

▶ **US Gold's** computer interpretations of Wes Craven's classic film **A Nightmare On Elm Street** are to be produced by **Arc Developments,** the team behind the classy conversions of **Forgotten Worlds** (see page 30). Work should be underway as you read this, and a provisional street date is set for late Autumn.

▶ Following last month's news that **Electronic Arts** was trying to persuade **Rob Hubbard** to write a 16-bit ditty, it transpires that he hastily knocked up a title tune for the recently-released **Populous.** Based on ancient Gregorian chanting, it's Rob's first commercial piece of Amiga music and it's hoped it won't be his last.

▶ Meanwhile **Bullfrog Productions,** the team behind Populous, intends to make the most of the game's two-player mode ... by setting up a network cum bulletin board that will help modem-owning players to link up. Better still, you may get the chance to play against the Bullfrog boys themselves. It's hoped that the system will be up and running sometime in May. More details next month ...

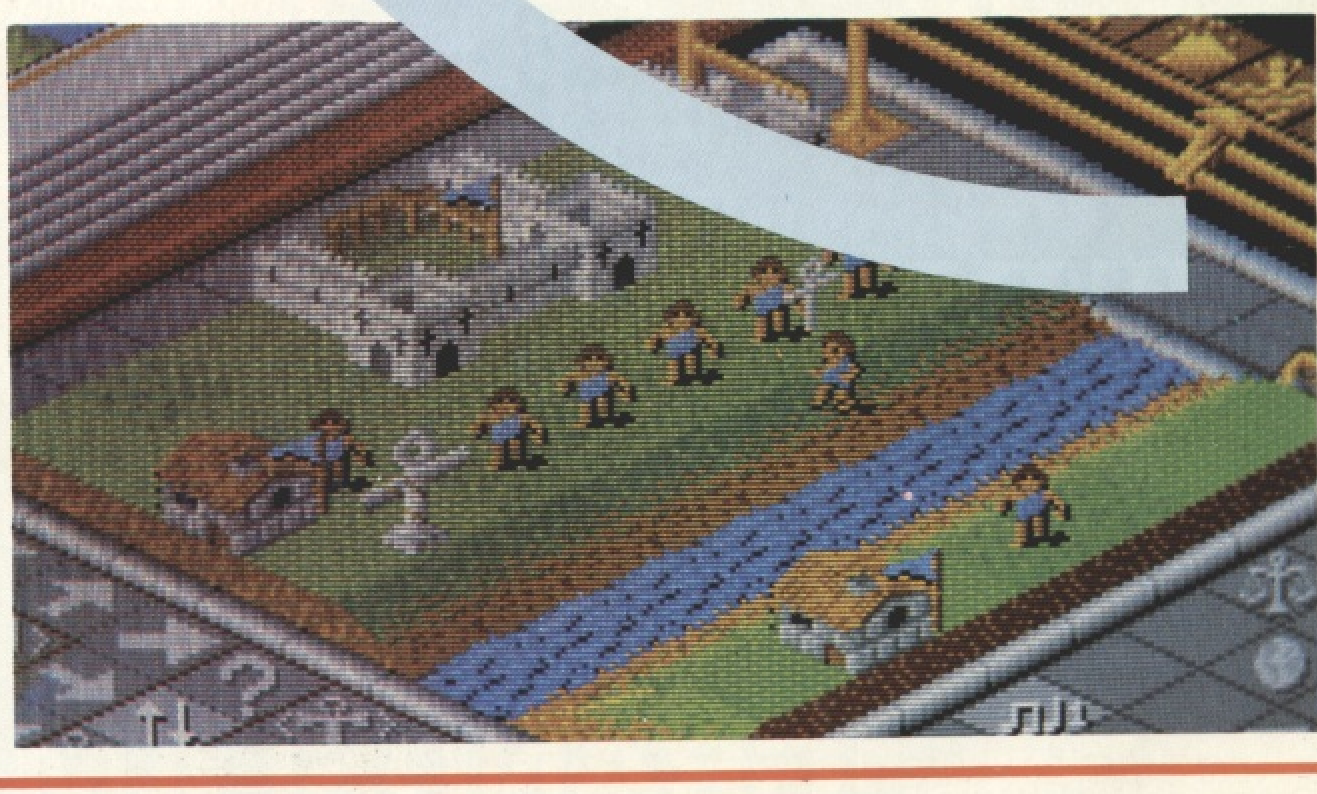
COMPETIT

As if being an omnipotent deity isn't enough, Electronic Arts is offering **Populous** players everywhere a chance to win a dream holiday for two in one of these four breathtaking locations – chosen for their **Populous** style environments.



GRASS WORLD

Lovers of all things verdant can choose to take to the train for a 10-day visit to some of Canada's most exciting Eastern cities, including a trip to the Niagara Falls.



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POPULOUS™



Photo courtesy of Tourism Canada

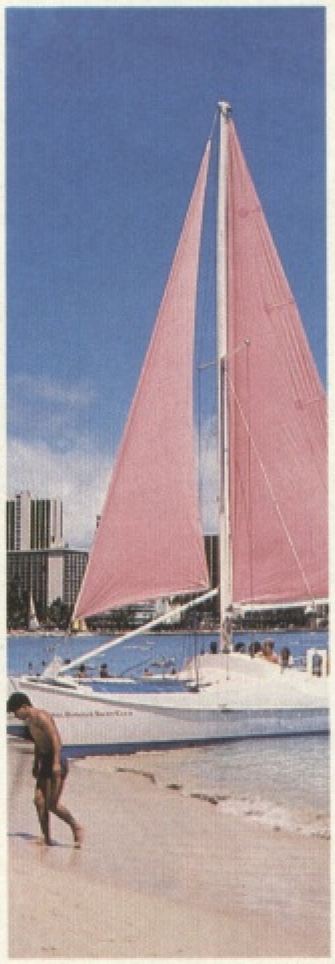


Photo cour

WAIKKI BEACH!
NIAGARA FALLS!
ASPEN COLORADO!
EGYPTIAN DESERT!
BEEN THERE? DONE THAT?

If not, now's your chance

Courtesy Of ELECTRONIC ARTS®

VOLCANO WORLD

Those who like things a little more rugged (with a little luxury thrown in) can opt to spend two weeks at Hawaii's famous Waikki Beach with hotel accommodation included.



Photo courtesy of the Egyptian State Tourist Office

ICE WORLD

And if all that heat sounds a little too much, you might prefer to spend a week skiing in Aspen Colorado.



Photo courtesy of U.S.T.T.A.

DESERT WORLD

Or how about feeling a different type of sand between your toes, by spending two weeks on Safari in Egypt?

In fact, winning the competition could turn out to be easier than choosing your destination!

All you have to do is find the names of four **Populous** worlds one with a Grassy landscape, one Volcano, one Desert and one Ice. Then, using your godliest handwriting, put these names on a postcard – along with the best score that you've achieved on each world – and send it to: **Pop Comp, The One, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU.**

And that's it! No tie breakers, no questions to answer and nothing to collect – all you have to do is make sure that your entry reaches us by Friday May 26th to be in with a chance.

The four entrants selected by the judges (who will include representatives of The One, Bullfrog Productions and Electronic Arts), will meet at the EA headquarters in Langley to take part in a play-off tournament.

The eventual winner will go to face three more competitors from similar competitions in European magazines, with the winner of this contest walking away with the holiday of a lifetime.

The three runners up won't go away empty handed either. To console themselves, these lucky individuals will walk away with Electronic Arts T-shirts, sweatshirts and five EA games for their machine.

And should our champion fail at the final hurdle, he or she will receive an EA jacket, T-shirt, sweatshirt and EVERY game that the company has ever produced for his or her machine.

So what are you waiting for? Here's a chance to exert your godlike powers on an unsuspecting world AND spend some time away from it all into the bargain. May the best God win . . .

SMALL PRINT

The judges' decision is final, and no correspondence will be entered into. Employees of Electronic Arts, EMAP and Bullfrog Productions or their relatives may not enter. If the winner's chosen holiday is unavailable for any reason, Electronic Arts reserves the right to substitute another holiday of equivalent cost. But then, if you're really a God you already know that.



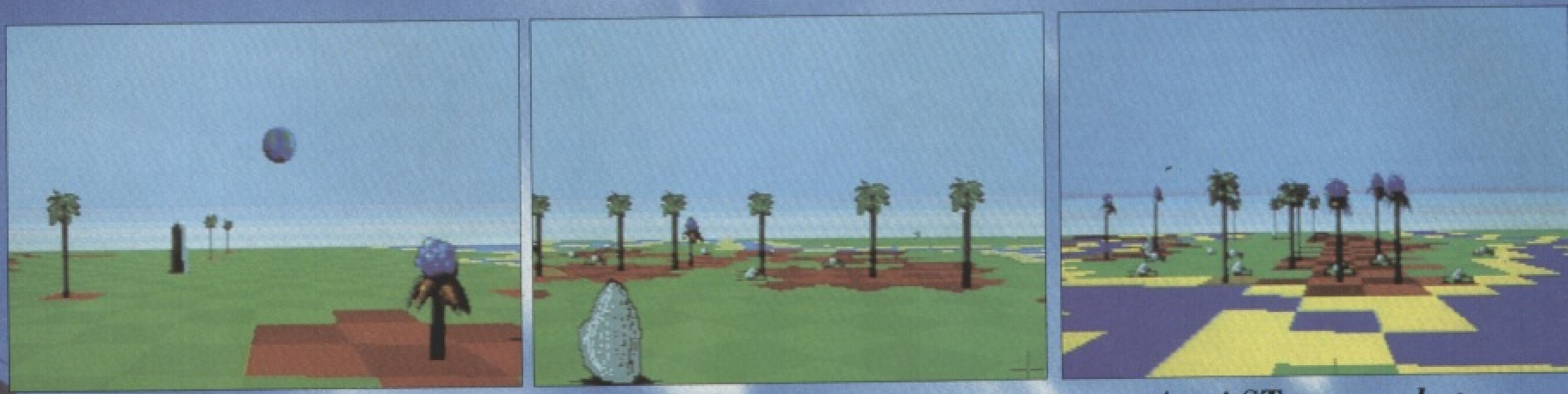
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The Man
BAD DUDES ARE TOP HITS!
Your Opponents in your battle for supremacy are four types of Evil Ninja star-throwing Assassins whose skills are manifold and dangerous. Also out to spoil your day are Acrobatic Women Warriors and vicious Guard Dogs. At the end of each level you must overcome the Ninja Master in order to progress – some examples of these superhuman villains are: A fire-breathing Fat Man, an Armour Clad Giant Ninja – who has a disconcerting habit of suddenly multiplying into an army!
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Take on the role of avenging angel as you mete out rough justice to the perpetrators of evil and lawlessness. Some of the most exciting scenes ever to fill a computer screen confront you. The future is here and now when you take up this challenge – PART MAN – PART MACHINE – ALL COP . . . ROBOCOP.
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WEC LE MANS
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Atari ST screen shots

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Work In Progress

XENON II

The two previous Work In Progress features have shown the involved process of converting a coin-op. There's another side to the coin though ... original games, where the design is a complete project in itself. Gary Penn has a look at the Bitmap Brothers' latest.



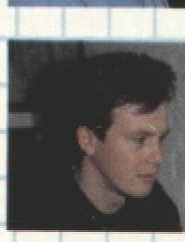
ST programmer Stephen Kelly, currently working on something big we can't talk about just yet.



Amiga, PC and now ST programmer Mike Montgomery, busy tinkering with utilities to aid development before he ploughs into Bros' next.



Front man and ideas machine Eric Matthews, beavering away on a progress report for Xenon II.



The screen is almost alive with bomb-spewing aliens – surely this is the point of no return ... then, out of the blue, a single press of the fire button unleashes dozens of bullets in every conceivable direction. Explosions abound, but yet more aliens advance – and surprisingly the action doesn't slow down.

There's so much going on that it's hard to believe that anything more could happen. But it does. And all Bitmap's frontman Eric Matthews can do is laugh and say "Wait till you see the heavy artillery." He is joking of course.

Isn't he?

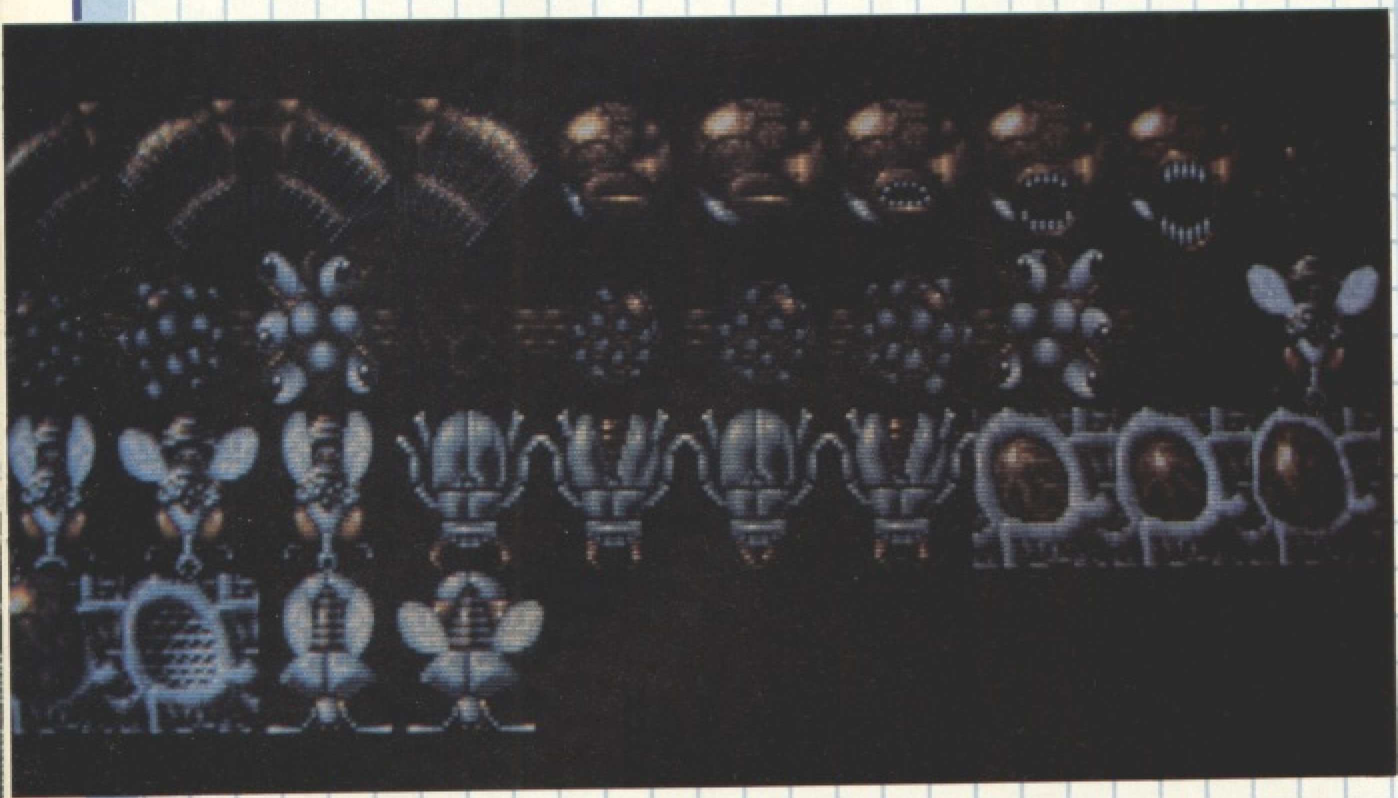
Just when you thought shoot 'em ups had reached an all-time destructive peak, The Bitmap Brothers decided to produce the definitive blaster ... again.

"Everyone seems to be into destruction and extra weapons in a big way," reckons Eric, "we wanted to satisfy this demand with **Xenon II** ...

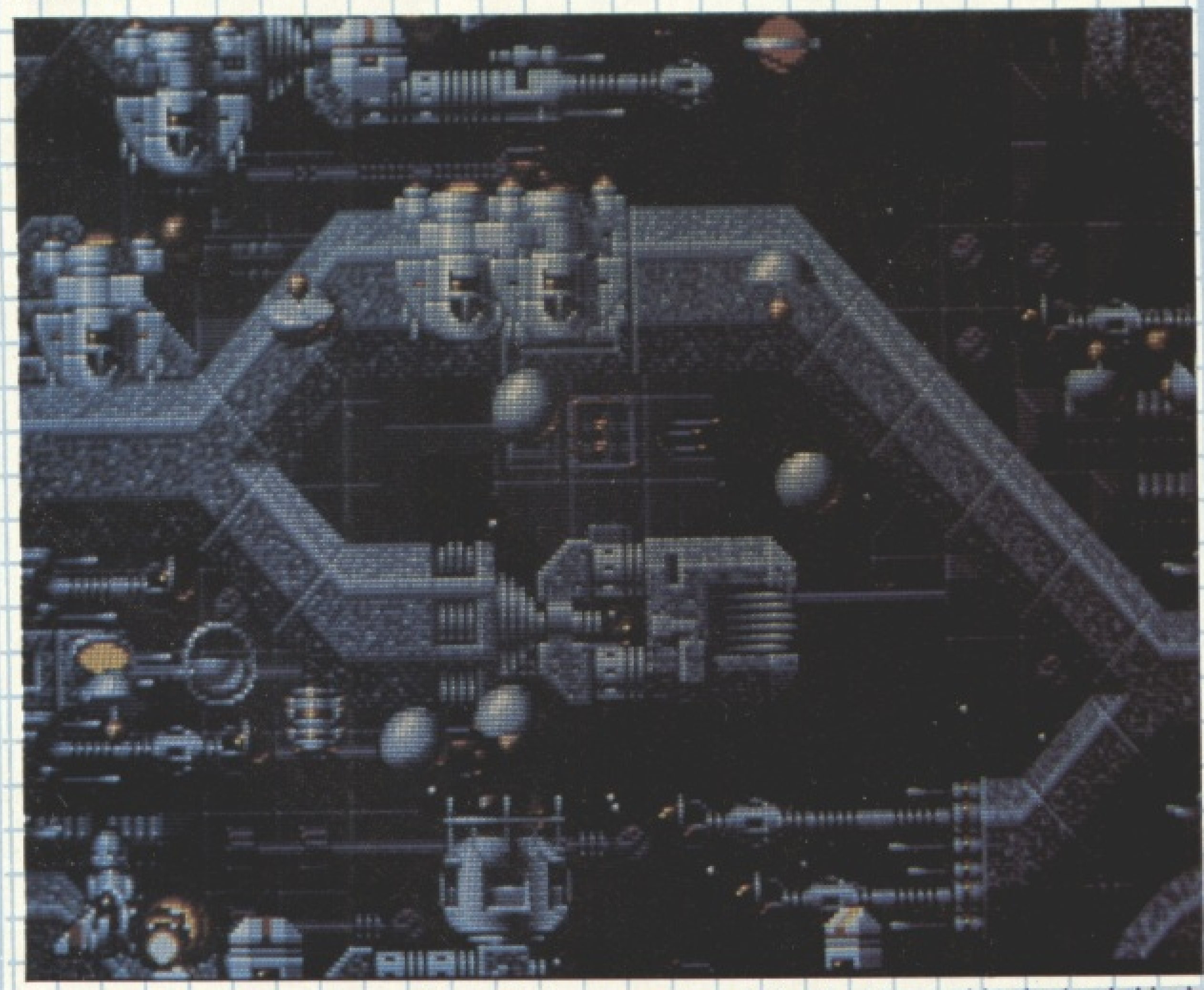
"We're trying to get away from the standard formula, where alien space ships fly down the screen in predictable, predetermined patterns and you have to shoot them all down before meeting the big alien at the end of the level. That sort of thing.

"Basically we've drawn inspiration from other shoot 'em ups – all the best bits – throwing them together and adding plenty of innovations of our own. You only have to look at **Scramble, Nemesis** and **R-Type** to see that it's what the coin-op people have been doing for years."

▲ **Armed with three items of what Bros describe as the basic weaponry: three cannons which resemble rocket thrusters (and behave like it), a multiple which is capable of unleashing up to 36 shots in 12 directions, and a string of mines to litter the screen. The effect is devastating, which makes you wonder how on earth Bros are going to make the more powerful weapons more powerful without weakening the lasting challenge. "We've got dozens of weapons planned, most of them never seen before and most of them we'll implement."**



Some of the 32 x 32 pixel Degas-drawn sprites found on the second level. From the top: four frames of animation for the tubes attached to one of Level Two's big boys from which a couple of snakes emerge; five frames of a fairly standard beast followed by 10 frames for an exploding pod which releases small, leech-like creatures which home in on your ship; four frames each for two insects, five frames for a pulsating 'sac' which releases the toothy beast above, and two frames of a third insect.



The Signals demo with preliminary graphics which might be used in the 'real thing'. Having produced a skeletal framework, ideas are continually added, refined, compromised and occasionally cast aside. Originally the ship was able to transform between tank and fighter – as in Xenon, but the idea was dropped in favour of a more straightforward blast.

So what do Bros see as essential ingredients in a shoot 'em up?

"There's a great deal of 'oneupmanship' among gamesplayers – it's a race to see who can finish the latest games first – so you have to make sure there's something to provide a sense of achievement.

"There has to be lots happening, with aliens which do something other than move around the screen in a predictable pattern. They need some kind of character – so do the different sections. Different levels need more than different graphics – an individual feel.

"Plenty of firepower's important – a feeling of power. An element of mystery is also essential – you have to give the impression that there's more around the corner, a sense of discovery.

"It's like in this really ancient coin-op," Eric enthuses. "I forget the name, but it was a bit like **Invaders** with these knights attacking you. At the end of the level this big frog jumps on screen. Then totally out of the blue, lightning strikes it and it grows huge and starts bouncing around the screen.

"People underestimate the importance of style and attention to detail. You can't have reasonable graphics and then use the standard **Degas** fount for the high scores.

"Sustaining interest is the most difficult thing. You can't pack everything in the first level and expect people to carry on playing."



A few 16 pixel by 16 pixel sprites from Level Two.

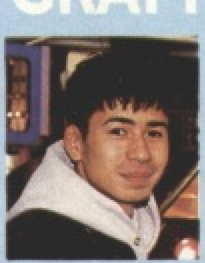
THE SCENE IS SET

Where **Xenon's** shooting action was backed up by a long, extraneous scenario, this time around it's been replaced by a short, extraneous scenario. The Xenites have left time bombs through history and it's your job to defuse them before they explode and alter the very fabric of time itself.

Basically, this is an excuse for destruction on a grand scale through six distinctly different horizontally scrolling time zones. Each level represents a process of evolution – from the prehistoric flavour of the first to the last space-age bent of the last.

Credits are accumulated by destroying aliens and proving your worth. The cash is then used to buy weaponry from a shop. And just in case you miss a few aliens along the way, you can reverse scroll the screen and clear up any loose ends.

GRAPHICS



Anyone who criticised the boys for their use of bas-relief (metallic) graphics for their first two games is in for a big surprise . . . **Xenon II** is a radical departure.

Newcomer Mark Coleman is responsible for how the game looks – although not necessarily conceptually: "Eric provides a basic brief for each level and leaves me to do the rest. Well, apart from reams of inspirational pictures he throws my way . . ."

Mark's work is executed on **Degas Elite** on the ST with a few extra features courtesy of Bros – like the facility to overlay animated sprites on background. He doesn't use pen and paper, preferring to sketch out on screen beforehand.

Apart from admiring the work of Richard Corben (creator of Den – as seen in **Heavy Metal** magazine), Mark has been into graphics for the last 13 years, and computer graphic design for the last eight, progressing from an Atari 400 through to an ST when the 1040 first appeared.

Mark's first project was **Speedball,** which took around six months – on and off. It may be of interest to learn that there are over 100 frames of animation on the players alone!



The level maps are put together with a special utility written by Bros, and constructed with 'building blocks' (those from Level Two are shown here – see if you can spot respective the pieces in the other shots).

SOUND



Xenon II's music is probably the most important aspect, as the subtitle – **Megablast** – comes from the title of the throbbing soundtrack which accompanies the action – a rendition of a track from the Bomb The Bass album **Into The Dragon.**

The boys were itching to produce a sequel to last year's smash hit **Xenon,** and they were equally keen to produce a shoot 'em up featuring **Megablast** (Hip Hop On Precinct 13).

"It's perfect music for a shoot 'em up," says Eric. "It's instrumental, which makes it relatively easy to reproduce on computer, and the title says it all . . ."

The boys got in touch with Martin Heath, big cheese of Bomb The Bass' record label Rhythm King. As fate would have it, Martin is into computer games in a big way, with a collection of over 500 games spanning from the VIC 20 days through to contemporary classics for the ST.

Understandably, Martin's response was favourable. A call to Tim Simonen (BTB's main man, who's also into computer games) made the possibility a reality.

The computer renditions of **Megablast** are being produced by David Whittaker (nephew of Singing Star Roger Whittaker). David's an industry veteran who writes music for everything from the Spectrum through to the PC plus associated add-on boards) and Apple Mac.

With hundreds of tunes to his credit, his 16-bit portfolio includes **Xenon, Speedball, Obliterator, Cosmic Pirate, Archipelagos,** and soon to be released **Dogs Of War, Iron Lord, Real Ghostbusters, OutRun Europa, Skateball, Weird Dreams** and **Aquaventura.**

Having played in groups since the age of 16, Dave's dabble in binary music began in 1982 on Commodore's VIC 20. He wrote a game on the 64 called **Lazy Jones** for Terminal, but found more demand for his music than programs so moved into music side of things.

"I use a Korg M1 music workstation linked via MIDI to the Pro 24 Sequencer which stores all the tracks/voices. The piece is then typed into assembler."

Bomb The Bass' Tim Simonen also uses Pro 24 Sequencer (essentially a mini-studio which is used to tell the drums, synthesisers, etc when to play), which helps David when he reconstructs the track using Tim's original samples on the Amiga – possibly with the original speech: "It's a megablast!"

David describes his musical influences as "everything", electronic music in particular, especially Jarre and Jan 'Miami Vice' Hammer. He doesn't like house or hip hop or anything that uses an obvious drum machine.

On the side effects side, most of them come from a synth. "I tend to rehash old samples and remix them," David confesses. "For example, I used a car horn for the klaxon in Amiga **Speedball,** and with **Weird Dreams** there are some realistic burps and slurps.

"There's a greater demand for more interactive sound – the simple-film like pieces, like I did for **Fright Night.**"

David's currently knocking up some advertising jingles for television, although thankfully this doesn't mean ignoring the computer side of things completely. Well, not yet, anyway.



TECHNICALITIES

To see **Xenon II** in action is breathtaking. But the same can hardly be said for the past form of its programmer John Smith (that's right, this one's not actually written by Bros as such). His first release was the **Arkanoid**-alike **Impact** through Audiogenic, followed by **Helter Skelter** and more recently **Pipeline** through Entertainment International.

John's progressed from his PET beginnings to Atari 8-bit and more recently the ST, Amiga and PC. The reason for the lack of releases until recently? John explains this quite concisely: "I'd never finished anything."

Xenon II's three layers of parallax comprise two solid layers and a starfield, each with its own speed to create a feeling of depth.

At the moment it's running at 17 frames a second. It can handle a dozen 32 pixel x 32 pixel sprites or 30 or so 16 pixel x 16 pixel sprites – and then there's the weaponry to take into consideration (and that's plenty to consider!).

"The program can just about run at 25 frames, but it slows down when it gets really busy and this doesn't look good."

The ST version supports 50 and 60MHz modes, but will John make use of horizontal overscan on the Amiga for a full screen game? "I might do – I haven't really got to grips with the Amiga yet. But I will be using the Blitter to good effect so it might run a bit faster.

"I doubt if I'll be able to reproduce the three levels of parallax on the PC though. I've also yet to dabble with EGA – it's an unusual graphics mode."

John's writing his code on a 386 PC with his own assembler, which was written in conjunction with the **Carrier Command** programming team, Realtime, and the **Star Wars** boys, Vektor Grafix: "We weren't happy with **PDS** so we wrote our own development system," John admits.

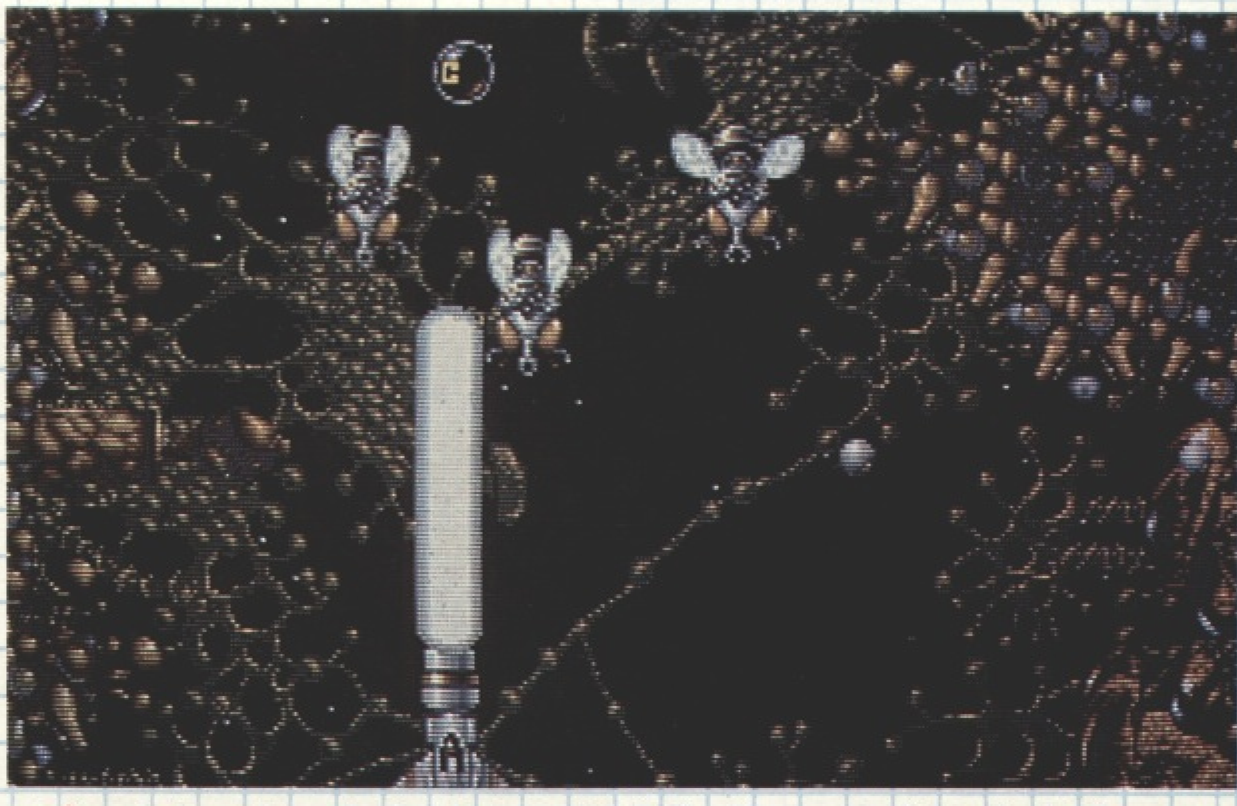
The code is transferred to the ST via a parallel interface.

"Most of the work's done in the last few months, and a lot of time's spent optimising routines. The first few months were spent figuring out technical restrictions. I started with the scrolling to see how fast it could go, then I put some sprites on top and adjusted the speed accordingly. Then the Bitmaps came up with a game specification."

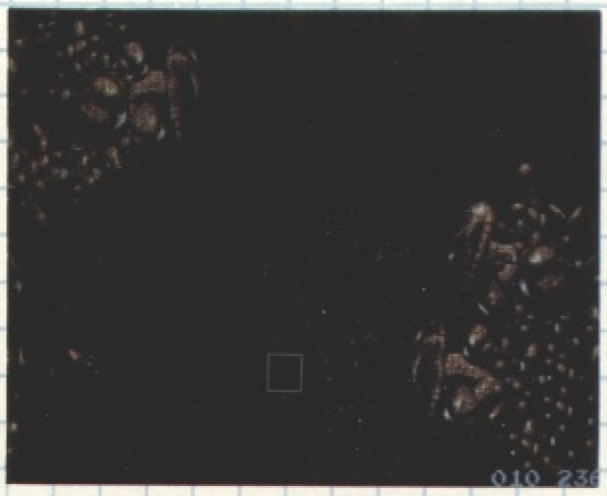
"If we can't do something, John calculates a compromise – the size of the sprites against the quantity and so on. It's all a play-off for time – to make the program run as fast as possible," Eric reveals.

John has little input into the design as such, although in providing compromises he also provides ideas. He's the first to admit he's not a game designer, and doesn't get the opportunity to play that many games. "I played a lot of **Boulderdash** and **Jumpman** when I was at University," he confesses.

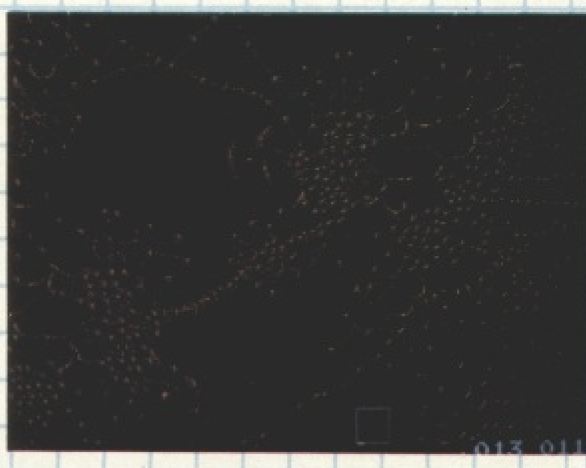
But does the man responsible for coding what it potentially the greatest shoot 'em up ever written actually like a good blast? "Oh yes, I'm a great fan of **Scramble** and **Vanguard.**"



Xenon II's **parallax isn't just a pretty frill. The ship can move 'in' and 'out' of the screen, and this is essential on later levels. It's similar in effect to the rolls in 1942, although here the aliens follow you . . . Rather than store all the frames of animation for the ship and aliens as they shrink and enlarge, only the halfway sizes are drawn – the images in between are calculated.**



The two levels of parallax are put together on separate screens. This is a section of the 16-colour foreground.



The four-colour middle-ground, which moves in front of and slightly faster than a four-colour starfield in the background.




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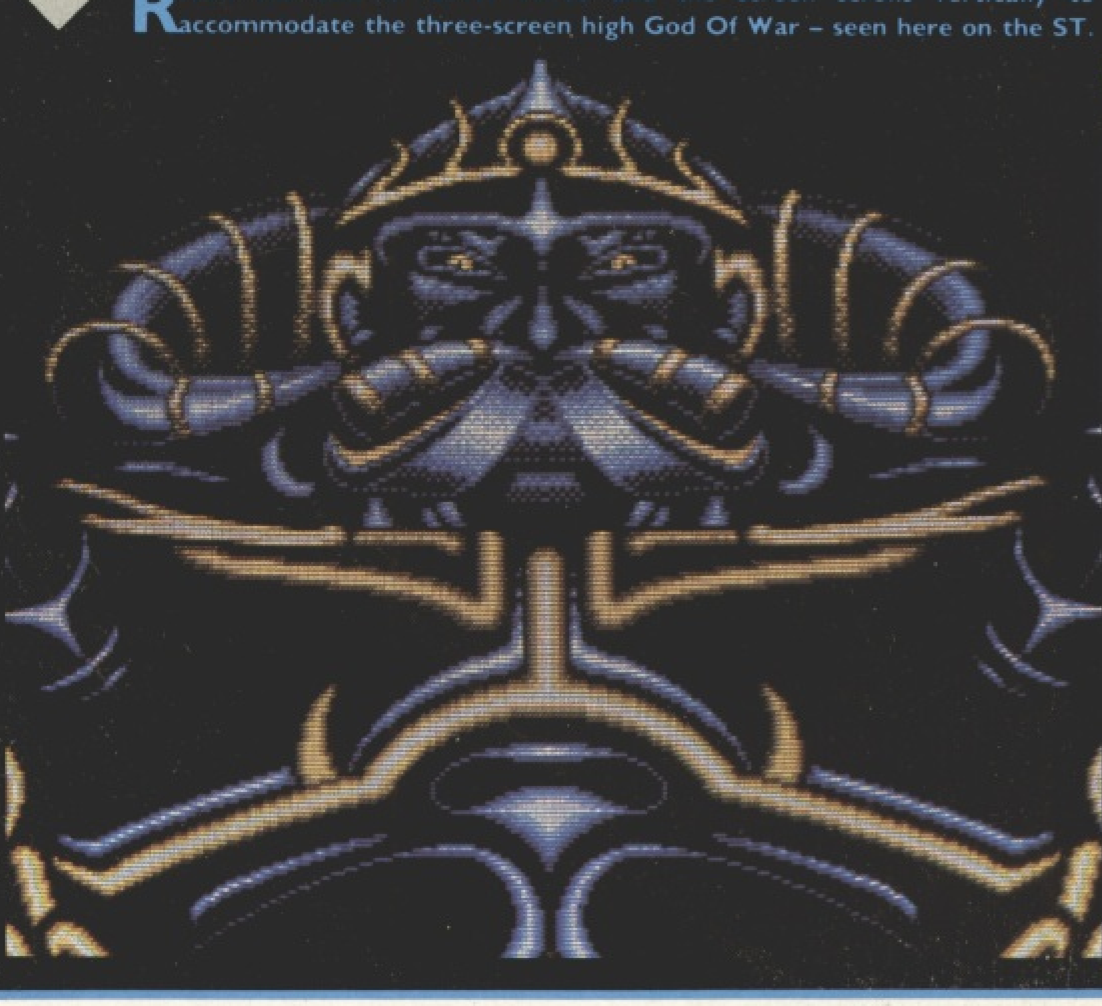
Co-operation and rivalry go hand in hand when you play with a friend. The alien formations are best destroyed by playing as a team, but it's first come, first served when it comes to collecting the pearl-like Zenny left behind.

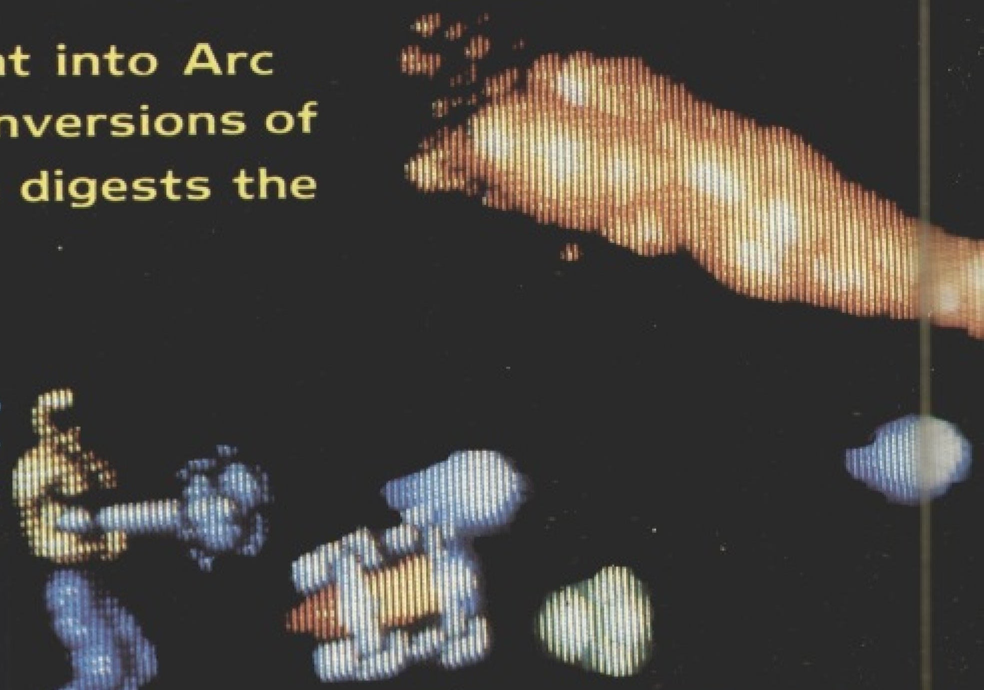


Forg
Worl

Following last month's detailed insight into Arc Developments' work on the 16-bit conversions of Capcom's stunning coin-op, Gary Whitta digests the fruits of all that labour.

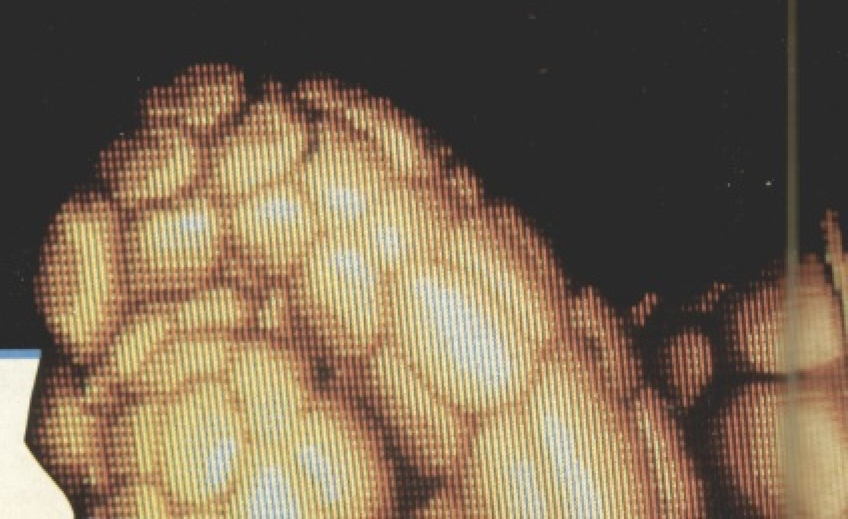
Reach the end of Level Three and the screen scrolls vertically to accommodate the three-screen high God Of War – seen here on the ST.





The once peaceful Dust Worlds are now under the thumb of the despotic Emperor Bios and his three partners in crime, the Paramecium, the Golden Dragon and the God Of War.

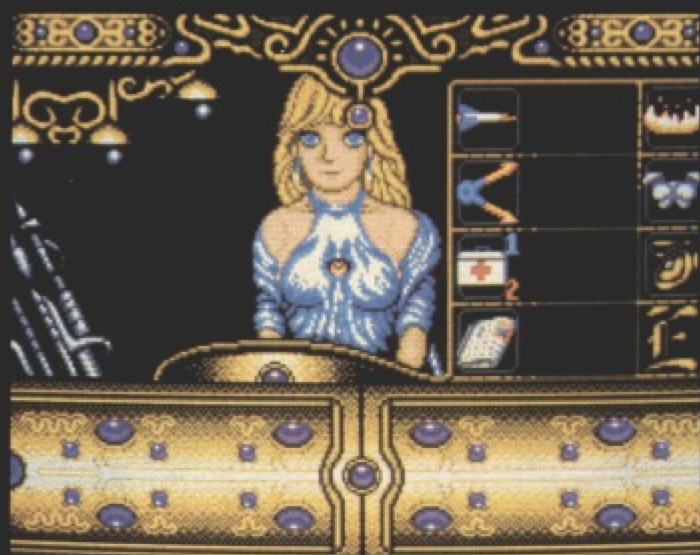
Frotunately the "aura of people's



otten lds



Extra weaponry doesn't come easy. You want it, you pay for it. Shops appear at regular intervals – entering them provides at most a 30-second breather plus the opportunity to trade your stock of Zennies.



Inside the shop you can buy missiles, multiples, napalm bombs, energy refills and, the most innovative touch of all, handy playing tips – like how to deal with an end-of-level alien. It's a pity that all shopkeepers aren't as – ah – well equipped.

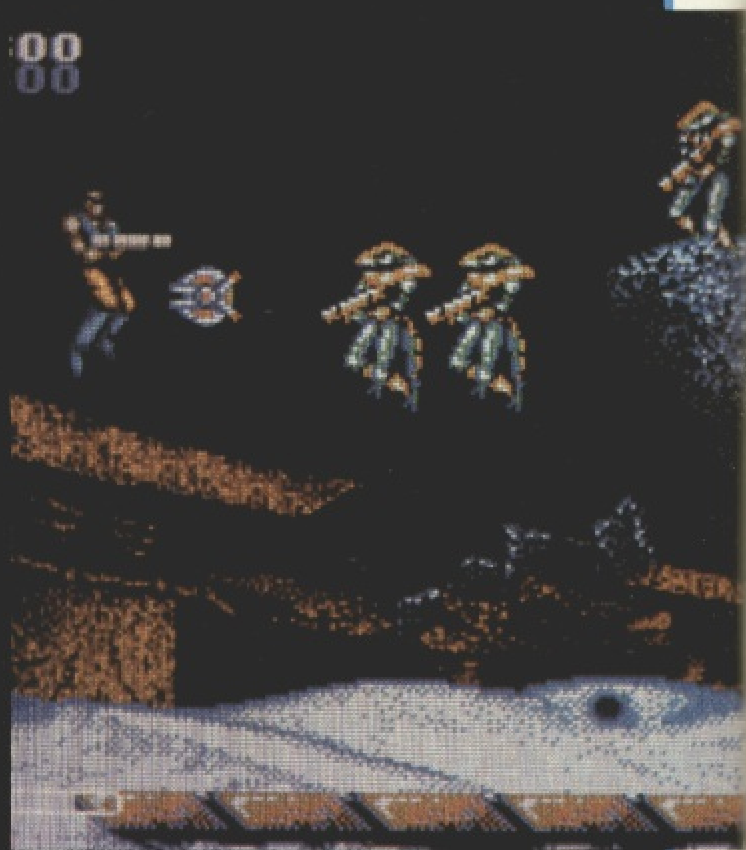


angry mind created two super warriors to fight against evils" – which, loosely translated from the coin-op blurb, means two big, butch types sporting sunglasses, mohican haircuts and big weapons battle through eight horizontally-scrolling levels of shoot 'em up action to put things right.

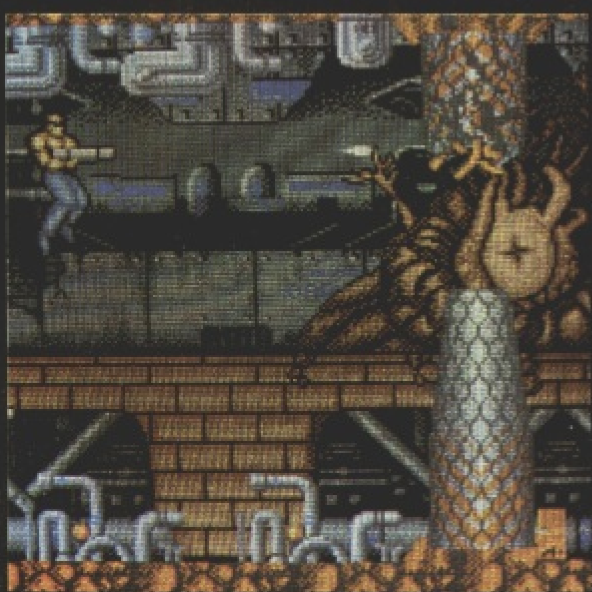
REVIEW



The literal translations which appear with scene-setting pictures of the guys before levels are a little obscure at times. "I'll finish you today for sure," Bios threatens. Other oddities include: "Did you find the guy?", "You cannot beat me with Paramecium alone", and "Ha! The Dust Dragon is no more."



Before the showdown with Bios at the end of Level Eight, you take on his three chums – each with its own weak spot. The organic Paramecium is protected by pieces of machinery, the God Of War uses his fists to keep the players away from his shoulders, while the fire-breathing Golden Dragon protects its heart by launching large spikes from its stomach!





ST

There are plenty of exceptional ideas in Forgotten Worlds that help it stand out from the crowd. The aliens are a little more intelligent than your average lifeform, following your every move, and the way weapons are bought in the shops in exchange for tokens is a pleasant change from acquiring extras as they float past. Best of all though, is the facility to find out how to dispose of a troublesome guardian by buying information – much more convenient than the more traditional trial and error method. Forgotten Worlds' innovative nature is also apparent in its use of highly-detailed scenery and neat animation touches – such as the lizards which backflip when shot. However, there is a minor problem with one aspect of this innovation, and that's the control mode. The coin-op features a dial, used to rotate the gun through 360 degrees. Since there's no such luxury on the ST, rotating the gun is achieved by moving left and right in conjunction with the fire button, which means it's impossible to fly horizontally and fire without the gun twirling out of control. Perseverance does prove rewarding, but the option to lock the gun in a forward firing position (as seen in Elite's conversion of Ikari Warriors) would have been welcomed. Nevertheless, Forgotten Worlds is a cut abouve the rest. The graphics are excellent, the action consistently frenetic, and there are plenty of neat touches to keep your jaw on the floor.

PRICE	£19.99
RELEASE DATE	Out Now
GRAPHICS	86%
SOUND	73%
PLAYABILITY	80%
VALUE	79%

OVERALL 86%

A

Impressive two-layer parallax scrolling looks great and creates an authentic coin-op feel, although this doesn't in any way improve the gameplay. Arc has done US Gold proud with this conversion of one of the most technically accomplished coin-ops yet seen, and it bodes well for future projects.

PRICE	£19.99
RELEASE DATE	Out Now
GRAPHICS	87%
SOUND	80%
PLAYABILITY	80%
VALUE	79%

OVERALL 86%

PC

work on this version started some months after the ST and Amiga which means it won't hit the streets until June at a price of £19.99. CGA and EGA versions are certainties, while VGA compatability is a possibility.

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Mindscape kicks off its attack on the British market with a release that tries to juggle peace between the superpowers. Gary Whitta takes the future of the world in his hands.

Balance O

The 1990 Edition



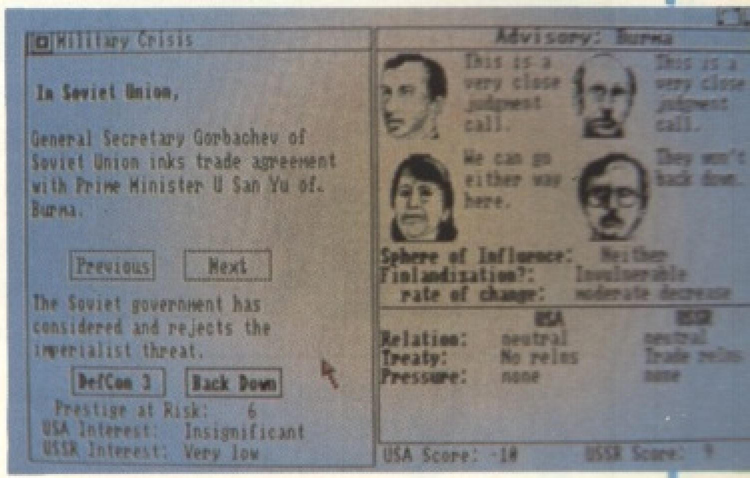
Fancy taking on the responsibilities of either of the two most powerful men in the world? There's a lot to consider as President of the United States or the Soviet Union's General Secretary – your country's economy, the well-being of your people, diplomatic relations with other nations... and most importantly THEM.

Across the water there's another superpower with political and military muscle equal to your own. And you can't have that. When there are two parties with conflicting views, one of them has to go if conflict is to be avoided (at least that's the theory).

And that's what **Balance of Power: The 1990 Edition** is all about. Increasing your country's global might while reducing that of the opposing superpower is the name of the game, and no holds are barred when it comes to devious and unscrupulous tactics. Oh, and if you can avoid a nuclear holocaust along the way, all the better.

The fate of the world is followed for eight years, starting in present day 1989. As this is supposedly a peaceful era, you don't score points and become more powerful by sending bombers and tank battalions around the world wiping out your enemies. A more subtle, diplomatic approach is called for. Making the right policies and decisions makes you and your allies more powerful, and also increases your prestige level (how highly you're respected by other nations).

And in the long run that's what wins and loses the game.



When you get wind of an unsavoury enemy action, Crisis mode can be called into play. The first step here is to question the enemy's action politely. If he refuses to back down, the crisis can be taken a step further by making a public challenge. At this point prestige points begin to hang in the balance as the whole world watches the war of words between the superpowers. If nobody steps down, the DEFCON level rises and the big guns come out on both sides in readiness for war. Back down at this stage and valuable prestige is lost. Push your luck too far and you stand to lose considerably more.

Of Power



There are two types of Soviet or US allied countries – Solid and Weak. If a country is classified as Solid there's no question as to whose side it would be on in the event of a war (the mother superpower ensures allegiance by signing treaties, helping financially and keeping a strong military presence) – and there's little chance of it being pressured into changing its loyalty. For example, if you send in the Marines to help rebels overthrow the Chinese government, it's a certainty that the Soviets will soon intervene to send you packing. the weak ones however, aren't so firmly attached and with the right treatment (and some threatening) they may be 'persuaded' to defect.

To give a helping hand in times of crisis, an advisory council is provided. They weigh up all the contributing factors and tell you who they think is in the right – and if the other side is likely to back down. But don't put too much trust in what they say – even the most educated political advisors can (and do) make mistakes.

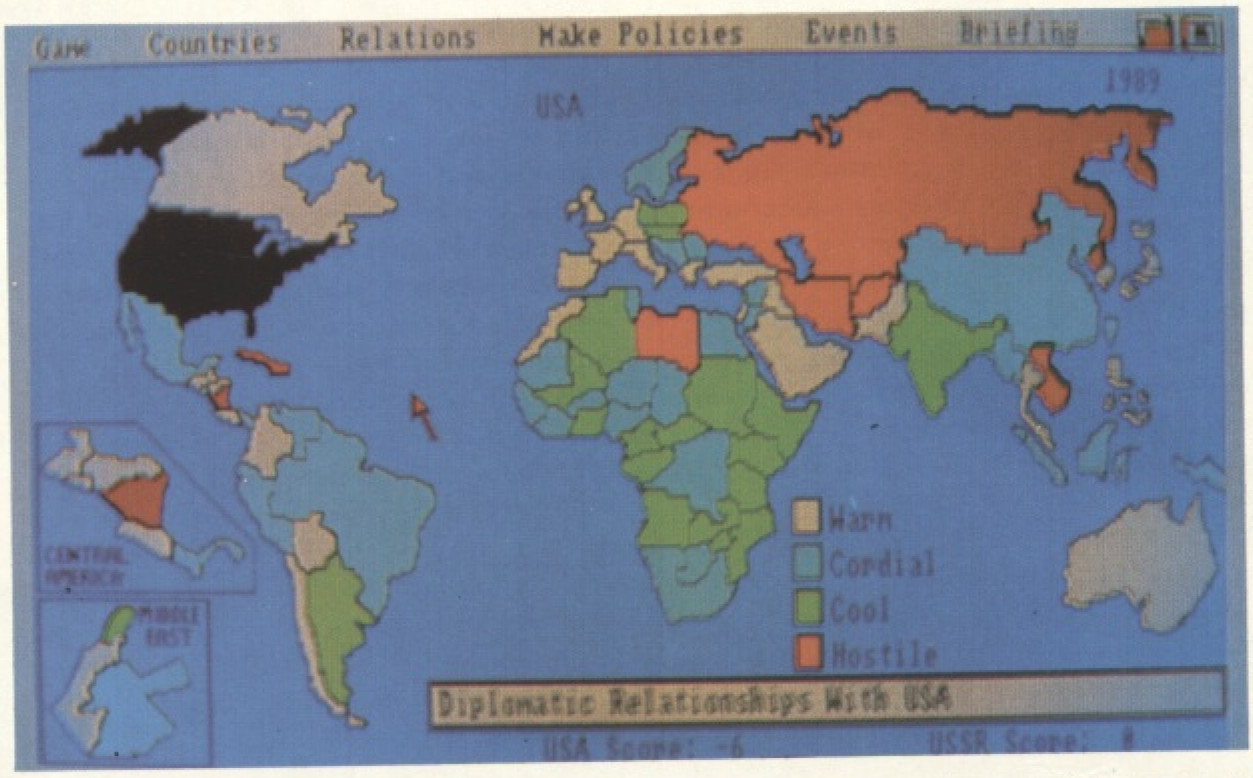




Don't let the bland aesthetics put you off – flashy colourful animation and sound effects aren't needed here. A game like this stands or falls on its strategic content, something which Balance Of Power: The 1990 Edition has more than enough of. For example, if you want to threaten a troublesome country you can send your secret service in to provoke trouble and incite riots, assassinate VIPs, cut off any economic or military aid you were supplying... the list goes on. There's no room for complacency. The computer is intelligent, plays well at all levels and responds realistically to your actions. If the Crisis Advisory Group tells you: "We've got no case here," or "We can't win this" you know it's because you're in the wrong. Only when you learn to slow down, moderate your actions and employ a bit of subtlety will you make any progress. In the strictest sense of the word, Balance Of Power isn't realistic. Ninety countries have been omitted and most the political and diplomatic procedures featured simplified – but that doesn't detract from the atmosphere in any way. It feels good – and that's all that counts. If there is one minor fault, it's that the time taken to calculate the effects of both superpowers' actions at the end of each year is too long. These times vary depending on what level is being played, but the average is around two minutes. This tends to spoil the atmosphere that author Chris Crawford has worked so hard to generate. That aside, Balance Of Power: The 1990 Edition is hard to fault in terms of design, presentation and execution. Even the 98-page manual makes fascinating reading. An outstanding piece of strategy gaming – especially in two-player mode (even without a modem option). Worthwhile even for those who own the original.

PRICE	£24.95
RELEASE DATE	Out Now
GRAPHICS	78%
SOUND	N/A
PLAYABILITY	85%
VALUE	84%

OVERALL 84%



The most significant enhancement in the 1990 edition is the inclusion of a fourth difficulty level – Multipolar. Here all 80 countries are active and do their own thing. They fight wars, ship arms and troops around the world, sign treaties – everything you can do, they can do (albeit on a smaller scale). Occasionally a minor country oversteps the mark and its warmongering actions need to be nipped in the bud before a chain reaction is started.

ST

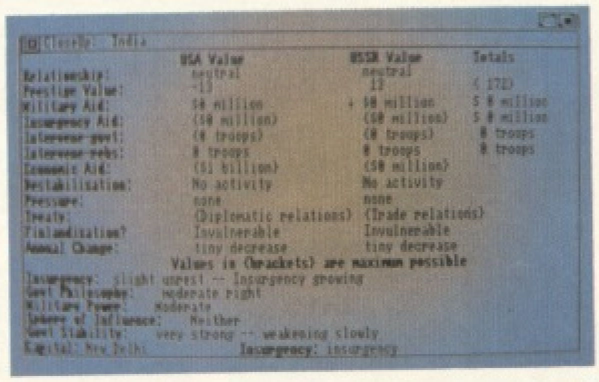
Balance Of Power doesn't exactly stretch 16-bit technology to its limits, so aesthetically there's no difference between this and the Amiga Version. And as you'd expect gameplay is identical too.

PRICE	£24.95
RELEASE DATE	Out Now
GRAPHICS	78%
SOUND	N/A
PLAYABILITY	85%
VALUE	84%

OVERALL 84%

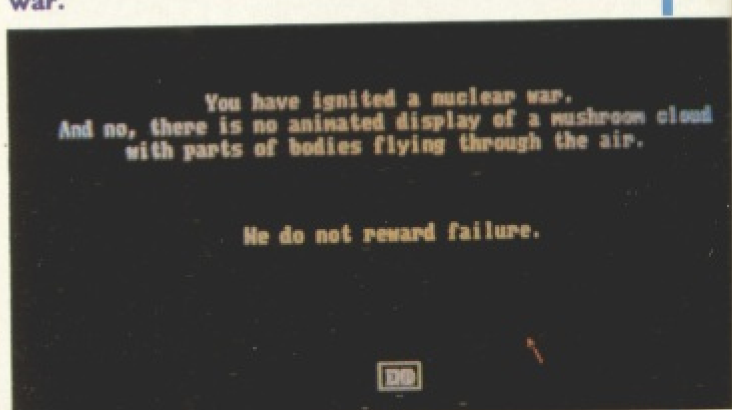
PC

Due to way in which Balance Of Power operates, it will only work when run in conjunction with Microsoft's Windows 2.0 utility (for those without, a coupon is included in the packaging offering it at a reduced price). To get the best out of the game, a fast PC (at least a 286) is also recommended. Apart from that, it's indistinguishable from the other versions.



Detailed information on all 80 nations is available, covering everything from military spending to the quality of education and public health services. This is used to find out more about the attitude and strength of a country: How might they react to diplomatic pressure? What underground political movements are there? Would the enemy defend it if it was threatened? You'll be clutching at straws if you don't come here before making a decision.

Balance Of Power has a strong anti-nuclear theme throughout. If a nuclear war is triggered by either side the game ends immediately and the player is branded a failure. No provision is made for which is the most powerful nation at the time – there's no such thing as a winner of a nuclear war.



THE BALANCE OF POWER



1945 **July 16.** The world's first man-made atomic device is exploded in the New Mexico desert. The US Army Project is codenamed Trinity – the union of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost. **August 6.** The US bomber Enola Gay drops a single 15 Kiloton atomic bomb, nicknamed 'Little Boy' on Hiroshima, causing 50,000 deaths. The Japanese refuse to surrender. **August 9.** A second atomic device, 'Fat Man', is dropped on Nagasaki causing 40-50,000 deaths. The Japanese surrender. The Soviets are worried by the new military threat from the imperialists.

1949 The Soviets develop their first atomic weapons. NATO (The newly-formed North Atlantic Treaty Organisation spearheaded by the United States) realises it has lost its strategic advantage and starts building up its atomic stockpile – the Soviets follow suit. The arsenals grow, the race begins and the superpowers are born.

1955 The Eastern equivalent of NATO is formed. The Warsaw Pact comprises Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Hungary, Poland, Rumania and the USSR. The formation of the new allied force begins a state of 'Cold' war.

1957 The Soviets overtake the US by testing the first Intercontinental Ballistic Missile (ICBM).

1962 The Soviet Union realises that its nuclear weapons are not powerful enough to reach its chief rival's territory and installs its nuclear weapons in Cuba. The outraged Americans blockade Cuba and threaten to go all the way to the nuclear brink to prevent the Soviet occupation. The Soviets eventually back down, but the Cuban missile crisis remains the closest the two powers have ever come to full-scale war.

1963 The first nuclear arms control agreement, The Partial Test Ban Treaty, is signed, banning nuclear tests in the atmosphere, underwater and in outer space. Despite this, nuclear weapons levels reach their highest ever, with the Americans establishing a lead with a higher number of weapons and warheads. Estimates confirm that US forces could kill off one-fifth to one-third of the Soviet population.

1980 Ronald Reagan is elected President of the US and immediately diverts more money and resources into arms expansion than ever before. This, and the subsequent Soviet build-up results in the combined nuclear arsenals of both nations becoming powerful enough to obliterate each other more than 10 times.

1983 Reagan announces his controversial plan for a 'peace shield' of lasers and mirrors in space that would destroy enemy missiles before they hit their targets. The project later evolved into the Strategic Defence Initiative (SDI). Despite the reaction of the none-too pleased Russians and massive cost (estimated at $1,440,000 per hour), SDI research will continue until 1992.

1989 Despite the signing of countless treaties and agreements, there are still more than 50,000 warheads in existence today. Approximately 30,000 are owned by the United States and, 22,000 by the USSR. The total destructive power works out as the equivalent of 12.5 billion tons of TNT – 2.5 tons for every person on the planet.

THE FUTURE?

May 29. NATO and the Warsaw Pact are fighting across the German border. Both sides know that if they lose the territory they defend, they will be at a strategic disadvantage in future conflicts. Despite fighting hammer and tongs for three days, no ground is gained or lost on either side.

June 1. NATO fires a low-power short-range nuclear missile at the Warsaw Pact forces. A retaliatory nuclear strike follows almost immediately with massive troop losses on both sides. Round Two starts and two more low-powered missiles are exchanged. More deaths and injuries but still no significant advance for either side.



June 2. Stalemate. Only a handful of troops have survived the nuclear strikes – the devastation and contamination of the area makes it impossible for fighting to continue there. And so begin the strategic strikes – those aimed at civilian targets.

08:41. A single Intercontinental Ballistic Missile is launched from a Soviet Union ground-based silo. It's 4:41am in Washington and this is when the President may be asleep – Western response will be at its slowest.

08:44. The one megaton device explodes 2,000 feet over Birmingham city centre. The detonation, equal in power to a million tons of TNT produces a gigantic fireball which in one millisecond consumes everything within 500 feet and causes a massive updraft of wind which sucks tons of earth and debris thousands of feet into the air in a radioactive cloud, to return later as radioactive fall-out.

Immediately after the explosion a high-pressure blastwave lays waste to everything within five miles, and severe damage is caused to everything within 10. Two million people are killed immediately in the explosion and those that survived will soon die as a result of either serious burns, injury or disease. No help is available – all internal medical, firefighting and police services have been crippled and no outside support can reach the city – there are no roads left intact and uncontrollable fire restricts any other access.

The intention of this attack is to prove to NATO that the Russians mean business.

NATO doesn't see it that way.

June 4. 11:46. The nuclear submarine USS Reliant opens fire and a Rumanian oil field of vital strategic importance to the Warsaw Pact is wiped out.

11:57. In counter-retaliation, a missile launched from the Soviet submarine Kirov explodes over Brussels. The effect is similar to the Birmingham attack, but on a larger scale due to the higher power of the warhead.

September 6. 06:24. The Americans will not tolerate further Soviet intimidation. After consultation with his advisors, the President orders a full-scale pre-emptive strike on the Soviet Union, hoping that they can knock out the majority of the Russian missiles before they are launched.

06:39. The American attack begins.

06:40. The Soviets detect the mass launch and minutes later empty their silos in retaliation.

07:29. 31,000 of the 33,000 missiles hit their targets.

THE END

REVIEW

Raffles



When the first isometric 3D games appeared on 8-bit machines they were greeted with wild enthusiasm and near disbelief. The Edge was responsible for some of the most complex games of this type, including **Inside Outing** – a classic in its time. The name has changed and there's a lot more memory to play with these days, but basically **Raffles** is **Inside Outing** with an 'F' registration.

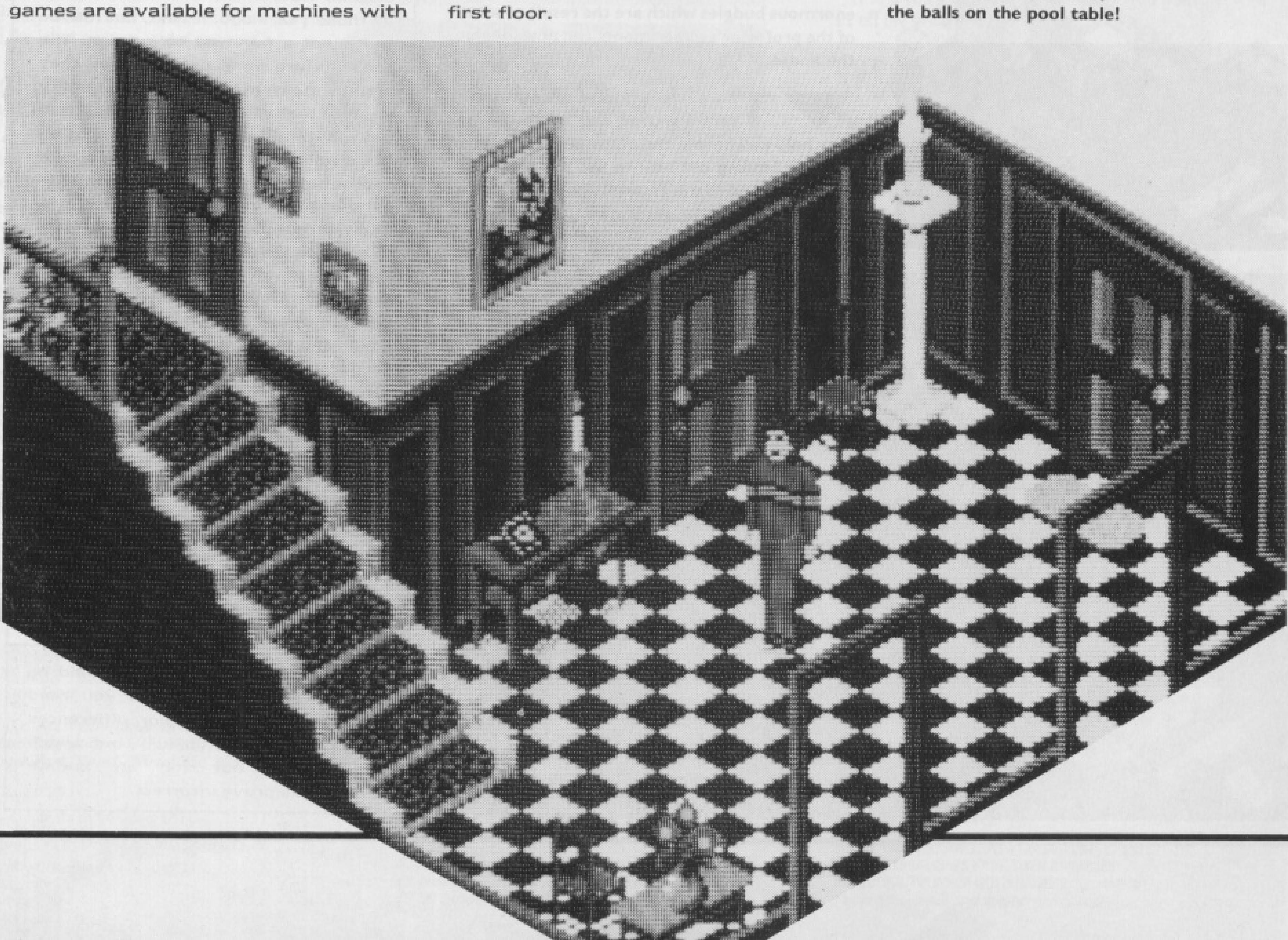
Isometric 3D was the one thing that could make the first generation of home computers look good. From **Knight Lore** on, the forced perspective 'real world' games didn't seem to demand fast processors or loads of colours. So what happens now that those games are available for machines with

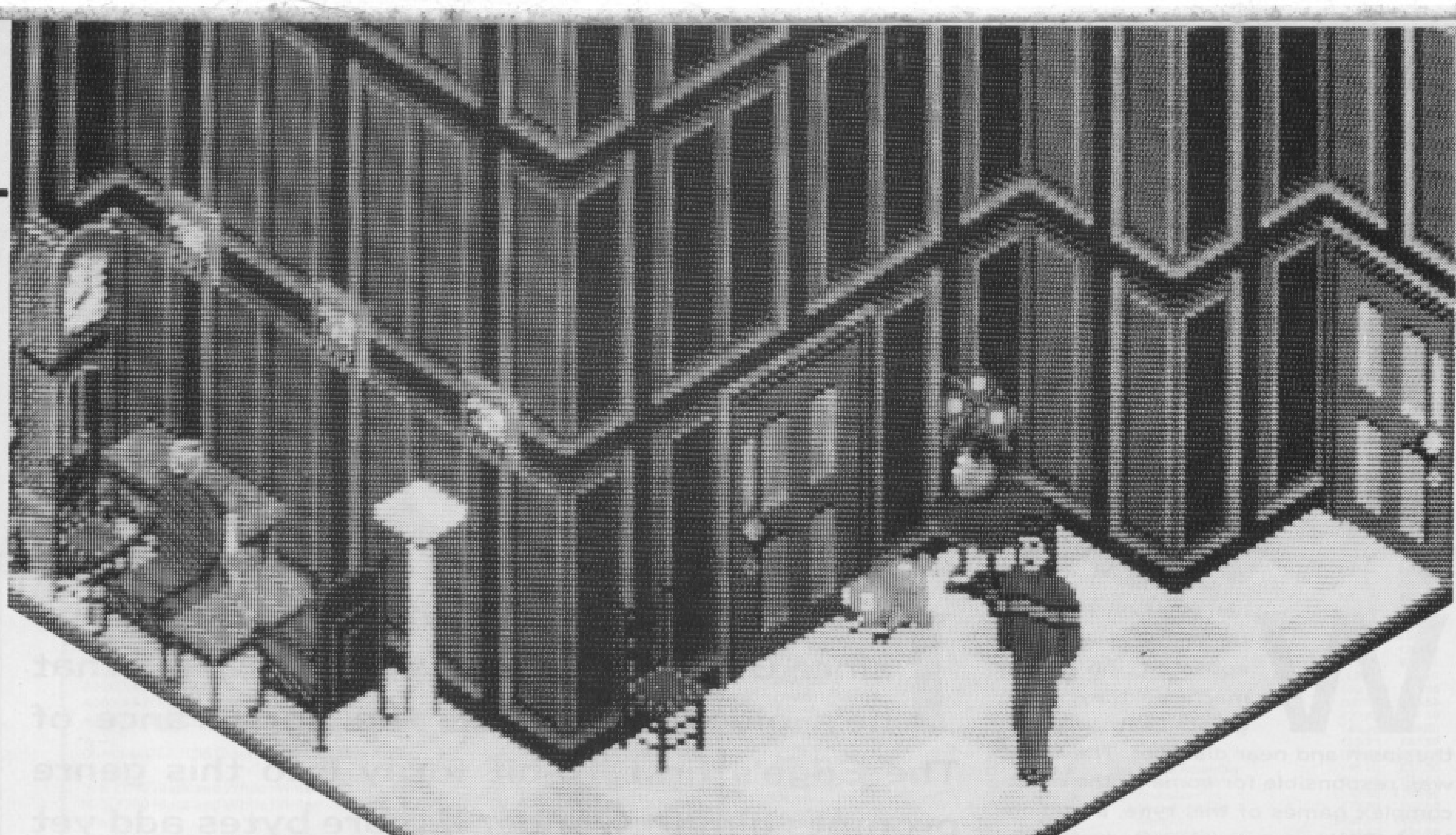
Isometric 3D games have been around since Graham Taylor were a lad. Now that he's older and wiser, the appearance of The Edge's first 16-bit foray into this genre prompts him to wonder if more bytes add yet another dimension.

all the features the older machines lacked? The answer, curiously enough, is: not much.

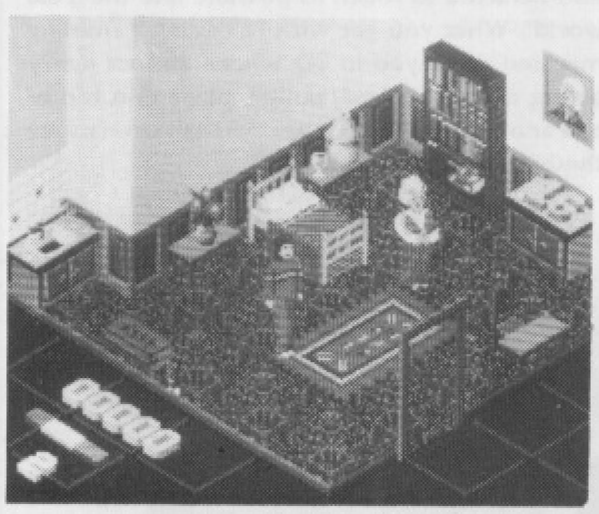
The plot has you playing a thief brought into the mansion by the lady of the house to use your skills to locate some missing gems hidden by her nutty-professor husband. As you find each one you must take it to her on the first floor.

The Edge always tried to out-do Ultimate by creating games which not only looked spectacular but which also behaved as much as possible like the 'real world'. What you get with Raffles is a rambling mansion displayed in 3D where almost every object can be pushed, pulled, placed on top of one another and picked up. You can even move the balls on the pool table!



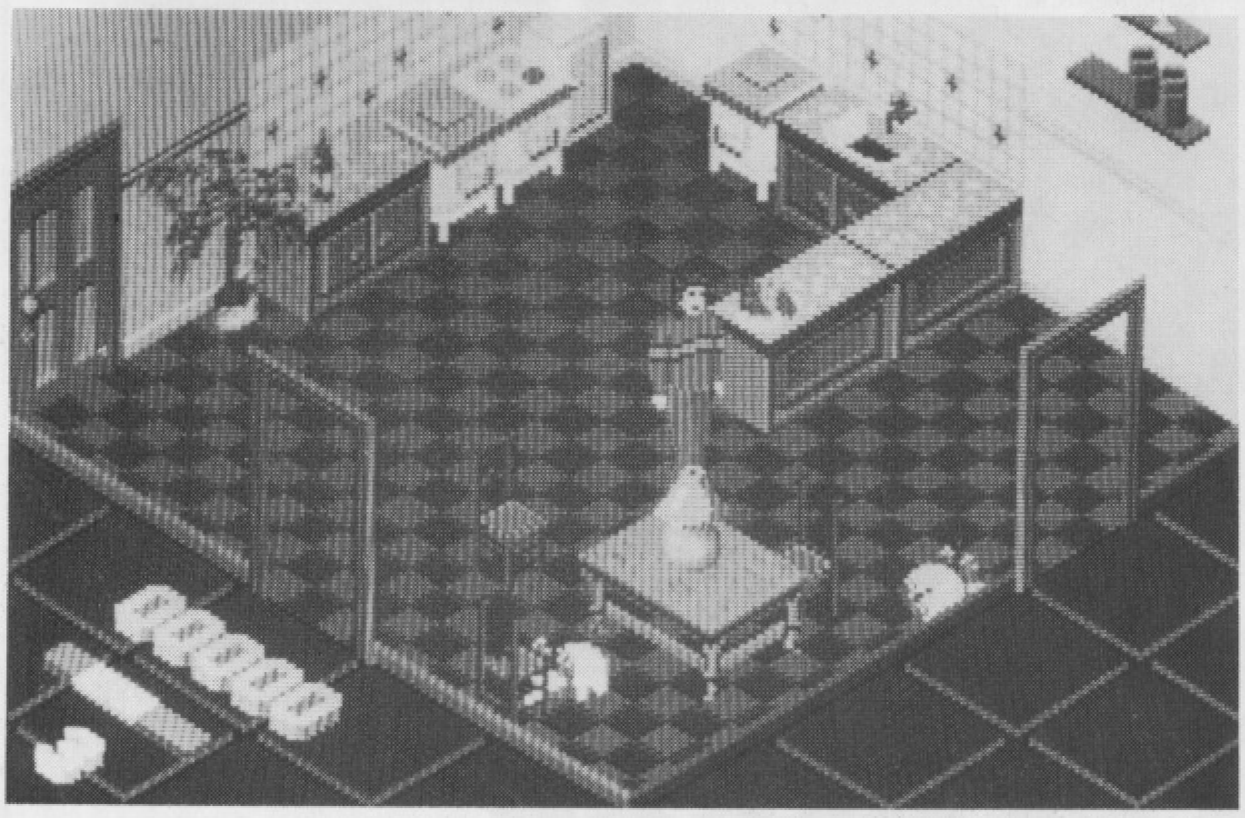


▼ **A major problem is simply finding your way around the mansion – there are many hidden or blocked exists but nothing is impassable and it's worth checking everything. Move a bed, for example, and you may discover a whole new area in the house.**



▲ **The problem is, obviously finding the jewels – some of which are very well hidden indeed. Life is made especially difficult by the vicious robotic rodents and enormous budgies which are the result of some of the professor's experiments and now inhabit the house.**

▼ **There are assorted objects scattered around the house. Some may help you handle the monsters, others you can eat. Finding out how to use the objects is another strand to the game. Raffles is part maze game, part arcade game, and part mental challenge even.**



ST

The problem with Raffles is that, essentially, it's the same game as the 8-bit Inside Outing, and that the extra power of the 16-bit machines has made little difference to the package. In fact there's nothing here that couldn't be seen on an Amstrad CPC computer. I guess I was hoping that this would be as exciting a discovery on 16-bit as the original was on my ancient Spectrum all those years ago. It isn't, but maybe that's not a fair way to judge it. The graphics are very detailed, but they aren't a massive leap from 8-bit quality – which makes them good as opposed to excellent. Plotwise this is a substantial game – lots to do and plenty of rooms to explore. Sound is less spectacular and falls into the adequate bracket, with bleeps and blips throughout. The puzzles are mostly fair and logical but occasionally irritating. The first few plays will definitely drive you round the bend until you find some way of dealing with those pesky birds and rodents.

PRICE	£19.99
RELEASE DATE	Out Now
GRAPHICS	71%
SOUND	60%
PLAYABILITY	72%
VALUE	71%

OVERALL 73%

A

This version should be available as you read this. Major differences are unlikely, but watch out for an update should this prove incorrect.

Be part of the action at the ATARI COMPUTER SHOW

Alexandra Palace, Wood Green, London N22
Friday to Sunday, June 23 to 25, 1989
Fri & Sat: 10am – 6pm,
Sun: 10am – 4pm

The Atari Computer Show is back – with many new products and developments. Atari has grown to be one of the major players in the computer world, supported by an incredible wealth of top quality applications, games and utilities – all on view at this show.

MIDI

All the latest hardware and software in the rapidly expanding scene of micro music will be on display, including keyboards, samplers, sequencers and professional studio software.

With an Atari/Midi setup you can produce top-quality music, quickly and simply – editing out mistakes in a way that's impossible with live recordings. So if you're in any way interested in making music with your micro this is the place to come to find out all about it.

CAD

Computer Aided Design has grown to become one of the most important uses for modern computers. With a CAD system you can design houses, cars and electronic circuits – in a fraction of the time it would take you with pen and paper.

With the high speed and powerful graphics of Atari micros it's hardly surprising that bigger and better CAD programs are pushing back the frontiers all the time.

And only at the Atari Computer Show can you see all the latest systems under one roof.

BUSINESS

Many companies will be demonstrating their latest software and hardware, specially designed to release the full business potential of Atari computers.

As well as products for the 8-bit and ST, you'll be able to try out applications for the powerful Atari PC compatible series.

And you'll also be able to get expert advice from professionals.

DTP

The art of combining text and pictures is big business nowadays because, with a low-cost DTP program, you can create anything from a club newsletter to a monthly magazine or book.

At the show you'll be able to try out the latest scanners, digitisers and super-fast programs, and get a first-hand glimpse at the way DTP is set to develop in the future.



GAMES

Atari computers are renowned for their ability to run fast-action arcade-quality games.

The range of new software on show will demonstrate how the power of these machines is continually being stretched, producing faster and even more addictive games with superb graphics.

The winning entry in the STOS Gameswriter of the Year Award will be revealed, and several new exciting STOS accessories will be shown for the first time.

If you're a keen game player, you'll find there's so much on offer at the show – you're guaranteed a real treat!

DON'T MISS IT

So for a great day out – whether you want to see what the future holds for Atari computer users, take advantage of the bargains on offer or get advice on specific applications – the Atari Computer Show is the place to go.

And if you send in the coupon now, you'll save £1 off the price of a single ticket!

SPECIAL OFFER

For the first time we are now offering a family ticket for just £11, allowing entry for two adults and two children. So you can save up to £6 off the usual entry price!

How To Get There

Alexandra Palace is so easy to get to by car, rail, underground or bus. It has its own British Rail station, just nine minutes away from King's Cross, and there's a free bus service shuttling between station and show every 10 minutes.

If you're travelling by road, the show is only 15 minutes away from Junction 25 on the M25. Car parking is free.

DATABASE EXHIBITIONS

ADVANCE TICKET ORDER

POST TO: ***Atari Computer Show Tickets, Database Exhibitions, FREEPOST, Ellesmere Port, South Wirral L65 3EB.***

Please supply:

- ☐ Adult tickets at £4 (save £1) .... £______
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- ☐ Family ticket at £11 (save £6) .... £______

Total £______

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Signed..

Admission at door: £5 (adults), £3.50 (under 16s)

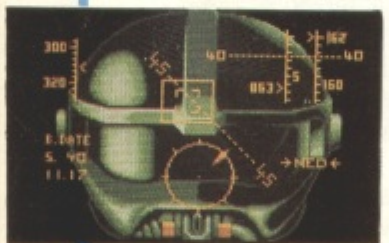
Advance ticket orders must be received by Wednesday, June 14

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PHONE ORDERS: RING Show Hotline: 051-357 2961
PRESTEL ORDERS: KEY *89, THEN 614568383
MICROLINK/TELECOM GOLD ORDERS: 72:MAG001
Please quote credit card number and full address

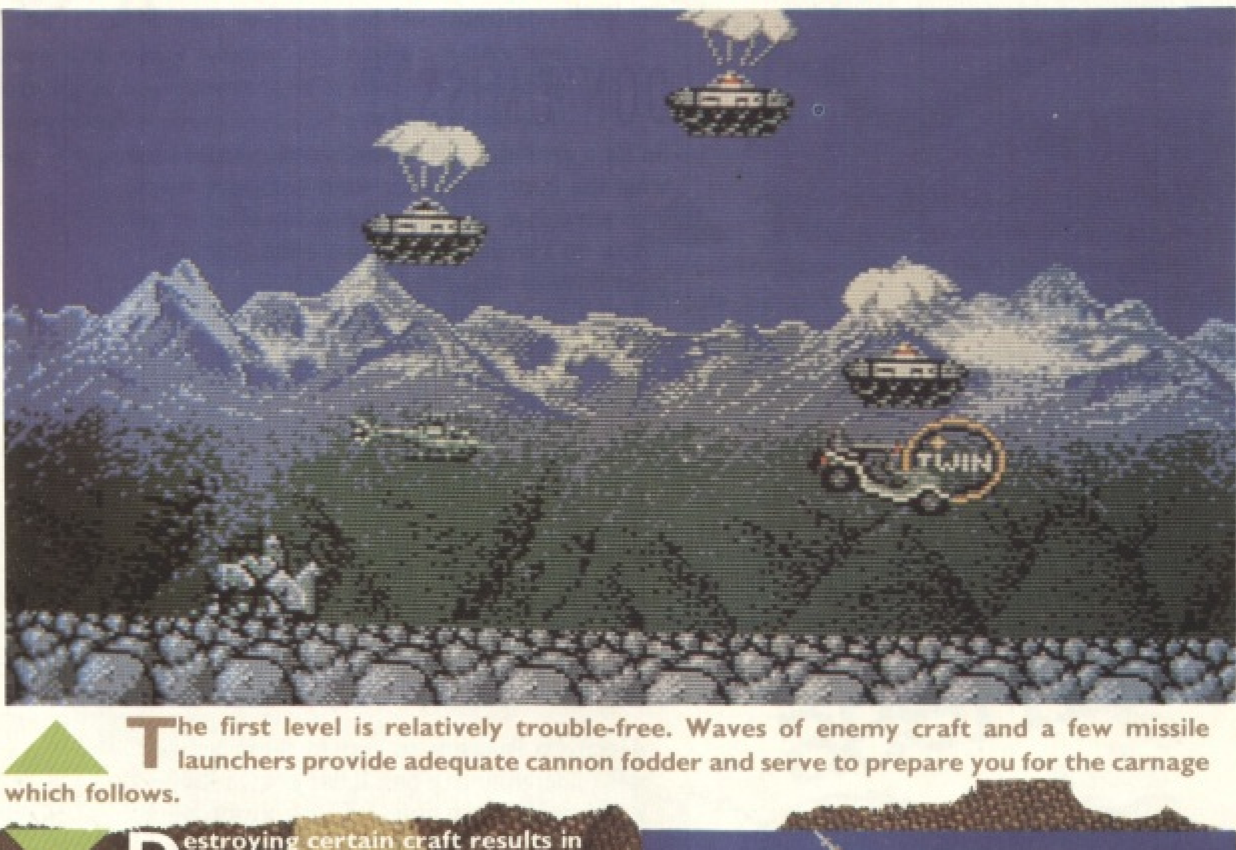
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Silkworm



The Sales Curve's debut through Virgin is a conversion of a lesser-known Tecmo coin-op which has nothing to do with cloth production. Mind you, neither does Gary Whitta....

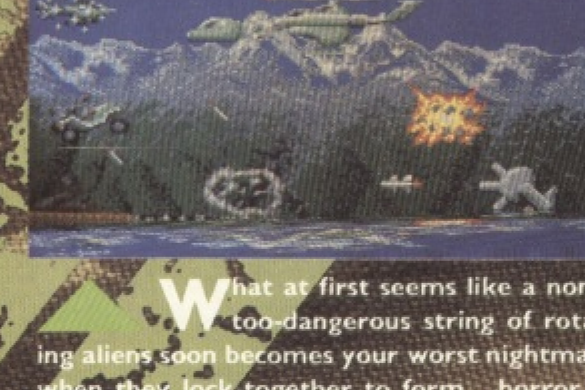




The first level is relatively trouble-free. Waves of enemy craft and a few missile launchers provide adequate cannon fodder and serve to prepare you for the carnage which follows.

Destroying certain craft results in a glowing shield icon appearing, giving short-lived protection against everything thrown at you. It's ideal for launching safe kamikaze strikes – just pray it doesn't wear off in the middle of an attack!

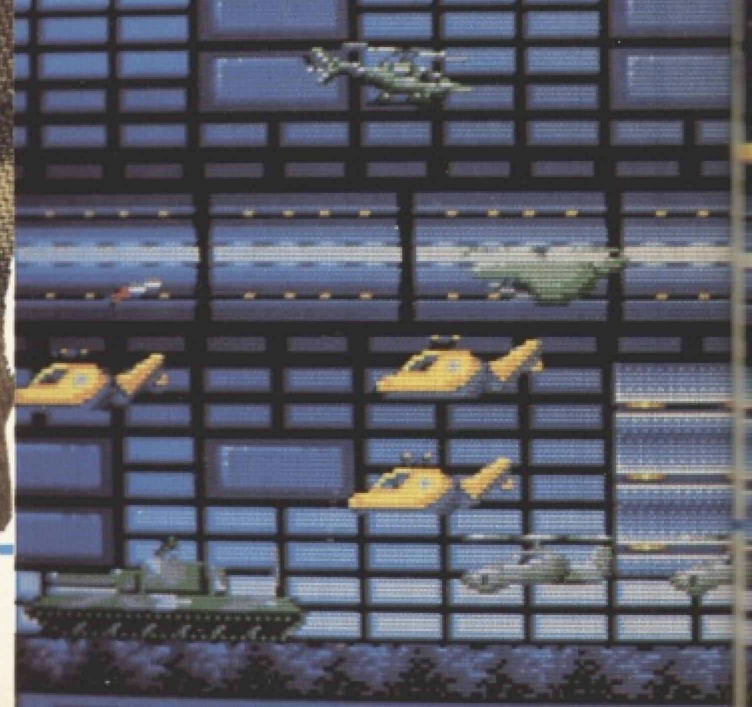




What at first seems like a none-too-dangerous string of rotating aliens soon becomes your worst nightmare when they lock together to form... horror of horrors, a mechanical 'goose' with devastating firepower. Knock it out and an extra weapon is yours for the taking – how about double firepower?

Silkworm makes no bones about its plot – in classic shoot 'em up tradition there isn't one. It's pure, unadulterated high-calibre action with more mass destruction than the rest of the year's shoot 'em ups combined.

Silkworm is effectively three games in one, although the playing area and adversaries remain the same throughout. Either a helicopter or leaping jeep is taken through 10 horizontally scrolling alien landscapes, or alternatively you can grab a chum and both vehicles play simultaneously.







A While not offering anything radically different in its game design, Silkworm feels great. The standard horizontally scrolling format is nothing new, but the presentation and execution are first class. Despite the small size of the sprites and relative lack of detail in the backdrops, the arcade feel has been accurately reproduced. The screen has to be really busy with sprites before the action slows down at all. The two-player game is a novel variation on the theme and the way it's designed means that the players have to work together to survive – for example in some sections it's necessary for the chopper to provide covering fire for the jeep so it can carry on safely and vice versa. A competitive element becomes apparent when there are never quite enough shield tokens to go round, which means you have to race to reach them before your partner. There are also several neat touches in this conversion that didn't appear in the coin-op (the programmers opted to improve the game where they could rather than just convert it lock, stock and barrel). These include an end of game sequence and some extra aliens, a couple of which were 'borrowed' from Thunderbirds! The screenshots may fail to inspire, but the sounds and highly-polished destructive action is sure to impress.

PRICE	£19.99
RELEASE DATE	TBA
GRAPHICS	71%
SOUND	85%
PLAYABILITY	88%
VALUE	80%

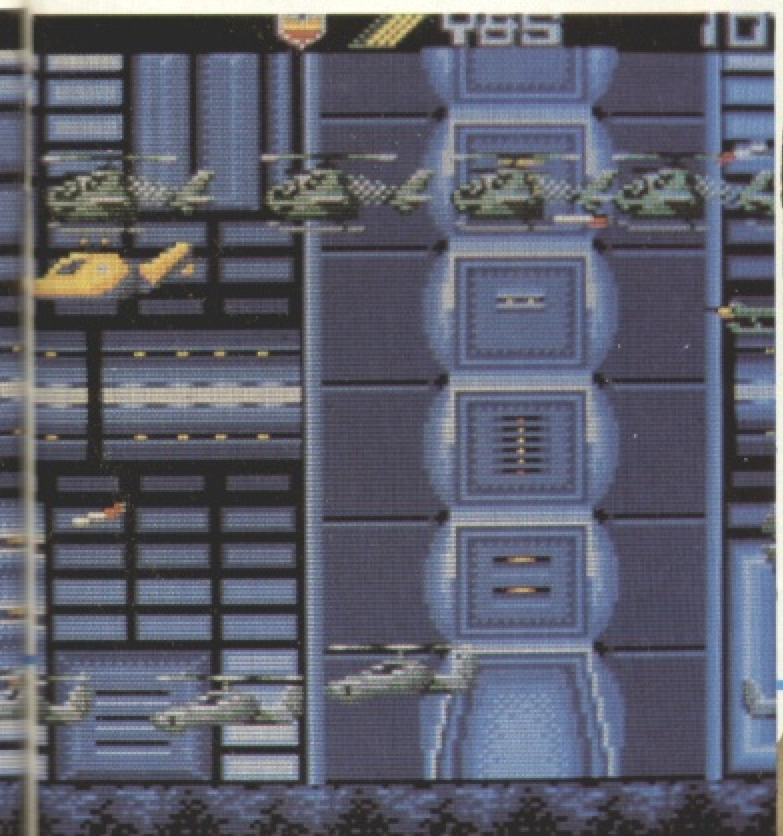
OVERALL 86%

ST As with the Amiga version, there are a couple of new aliens not seen in the coin-op plus an impressive end sequence. Despite slightly jerky animation and scrolling, this is easily as playable as its arcade parent.

PRICE	£19.99
RELEASE DATE	TBA
GRAPHICS	69%
SOUND	79%
PLAYABILITY	88%
VALUE	80%

OVERALL 86%

PC How the ST and Amiga versions fare will be a major factor when Virgin decides whether or not to produce one for the PC. One thing's for sure – if it does see the light of day, it won't be until much later on in the year.



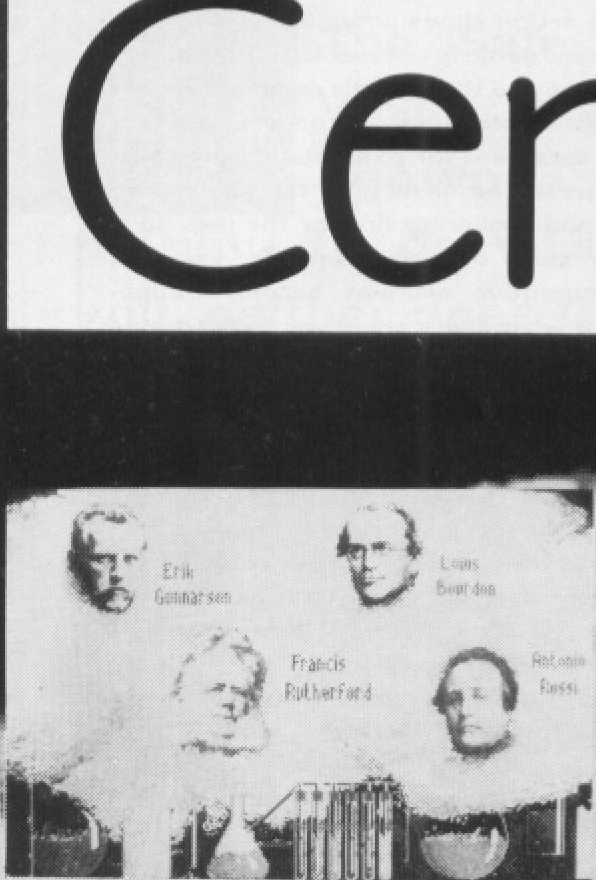


As you progress, the more aggressive craft arrive on the scene. Rocket launchers now come in all shapes and sizes, including a mobile SAM site that sprays its payload off at all angles. Worse still, it sits at the back of the screen, out of range.

Collecting two shield icons in quick succession releases a smart bomb. What it does is predictable enough, but the way it does it is impressive. A spectacular 'white-out' and sampled explosion sound accompanies the obliteration of all on-screen enemies.



Journey To Th
Centre Of Th
Earth



Choose your character from a selection of four – Erik Gunnarson, Louis Bourdin, Francis Rutherford and Antonio Rossie – all highly-skilled scientists. Each of these has different characteristics: the older ones are wiser, while the younger have greater strength. Essentially however, there's little difference from character to character.

Rainbow Arts digs deep into science fiction history for its latest arcade adventure. Paul Boughton heads for the core.

ne

ne



▲ **Elephantitis afflicts one of the arcade sequences, with woolly beasts from pre-history charging forward while you try to dodge them. Not exactly rivetting stuff.**

Journey To The Centre Of The Earth was written by the French writer Jules Verne (1828-1905), who is today recognised as one of the founding fathers of science fiction. The novel, the author's second, was published in 1864 and has rarely been out of print since.

Much of the Verne's science fiction concerned fantastic voyages of discovery. From **The Earth To The Moon** (1865) and **Round The Moon** (1870) for example. Perhaps his most famous work was **Twenty Thousand Leagues Under The Sea** (1870). Verne's books can seem to be heavy going nowadays, possibly due to bad translation, but his imagination and vision still shine through.

And so to the plot. A daring scientist, Professor Otto Lindenbrok, has discovered an 16th Century parchment, apparently written by a sage and alchemist called Aane Saknussenn, which claims it is possible to reach the Earth's very core. Lindenbrok mounts an expedition to see if it is true.

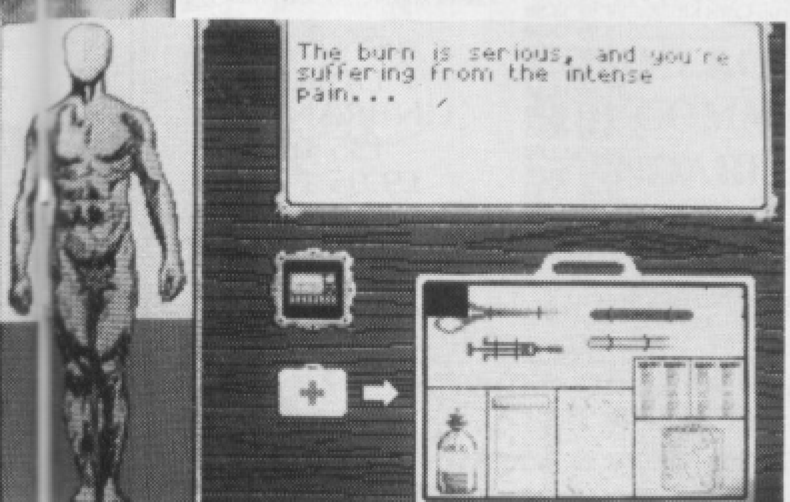
Three months later, this expedition returns full of miraculous tales and stories. But are they true? You convince Lindenbrok to let you join a new venture to travel to the Earth's very centre.

On the way you have to monitor your strength, vitality, food and water, medical state etc. And, in a series of arcade sequences, avoid or do battle with charging mammoths, falling boulders and strange mutated reptiles.



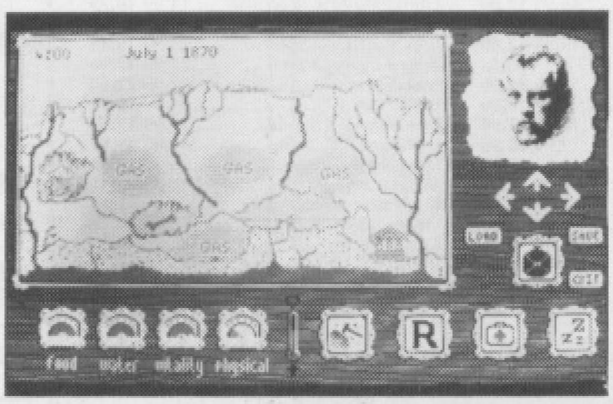
▲ **A rockfall, the first arcade sequence, separates you from the main party. The idea is quite simple, you move your character back and forth across the screen, moving higher all the time and avoiding the falling rocks. Unfortunately, this sequence is pretty straightforward and rather crude. Complete the task and a truly awful and distorted voice booms out something totally incomprehensible.**





▲ **Click the arrow over your near-naked body to find out what ailments are afflicting you – burns, cuts, chills, fractures or whatever. By using the medical kit the dehabilitating effect of these can be lessened, but medical supplies don't last forever so it pays to be careful when exploring.**

▼ **The progress screen is fairly self-explanatory. It pays to keep an eye on food, water, vitality and your physical condition as well as locations to be avoided. Food consumption is controlled by rationing, water is collected, while vitality and physical condition is boosted by sleep and use of the medical kit.**



ST

This is one journey that's going nowhere. The mix of strategy, adventure and arcade 'action' doesn't really work, as no section is satisfying in its own right – the arcade sequences are, to put it bluntly, poor and unforgivably boring. And while digitised pictures may be pretty and impressive, when you've seen them once or twice, that's easily enough. It quickly becomes tedious waiting for them to load before being able to progress further into the game. The disk-changing isn't excessive, but it's still boring have to wait for bits and pieces of the program to load, especially when they're irrelevant to the gameplay.

PRICE	£19.99
RELEASE DATE	Out Now
GRAPHICS	62%
SOUND	59%
PLAYABILITY	54%
VALUE	57%
OVERALL	**52%**

PC

Possibly the better version of the three, this still lacks excitement or atmosphere. What it does have is a raunchy sampled tune at the beginning (it's scratchy, but still really surprising) and some excellent static illustrations in EGA mode.

PRICE	£19.99
RELEASE DATE	Out Now
GRAPHICS	70%
SOUND	78%
PLAYABILITY	54%
VALUE	60%
OVERALL	**58%**

A

Sharper and clearer than the Atari version, this one is still probably the greatest disappointment of all, running at speeds far slower than the machine is capable of.

PRICE	£19.99
RELEASE DATE	Out Now
GRAPHICS	62%
SOUND	59%
PLAYABILITY	54%
VALUE	57%
OVERALL	**52%**

TIPS

BARBARIAN II

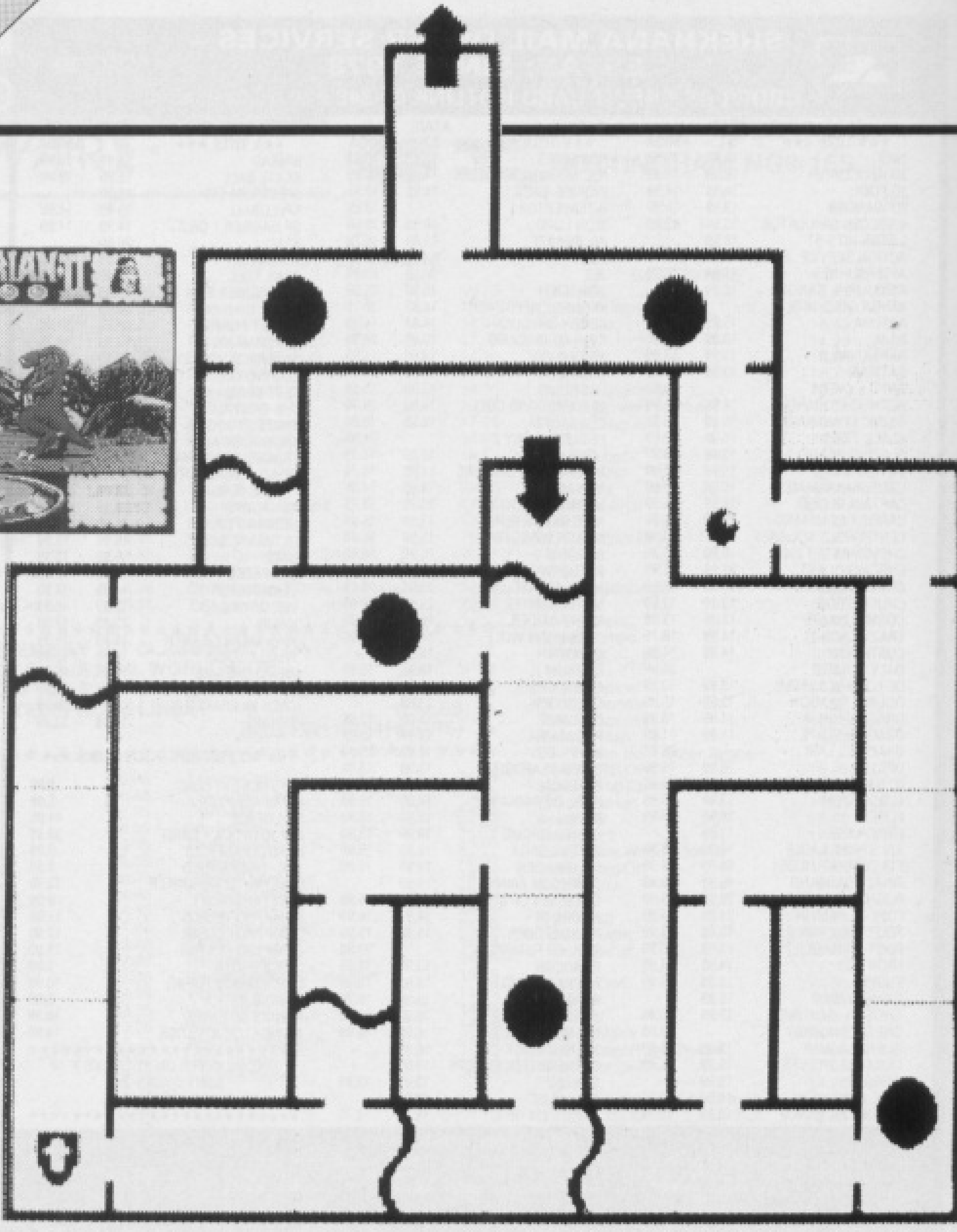
Palace



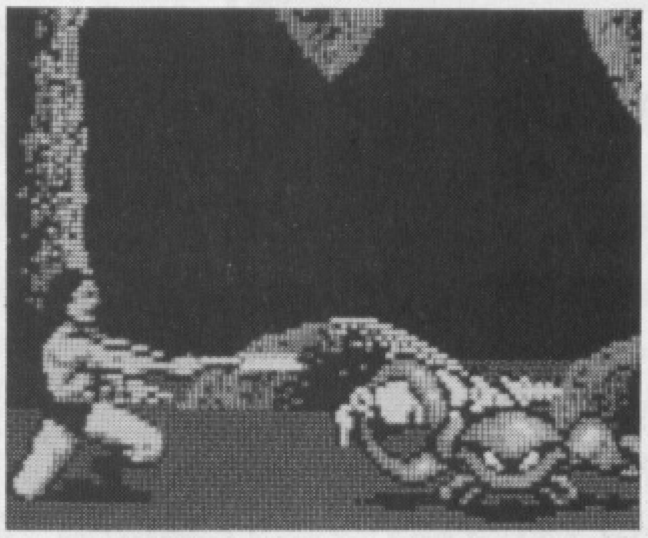
LEVEL ONE. Repeated use of the head chop is the most effective tactic against the Neanderthal Man, but make sure you take a step back between hits. Stay low to survive against the Sauron Beast — if you don't you'll lose your head. Chopping is the best tactic here, but step back between each strike. Use the low chop against the Mutant Chicken, but wait until it's standing bolt upright before you let loose.

LEVEL TWO. The Orc Guard pushes you up against the wall — use repeated head chops to kill him. Counter his stabbing manoeuvre with a low chop. When the Crab comes near, kick at it (it tries to nip you) and then low chop it. If you miss, take a step back and try again. Carnivores are killed with the chop, except when they leap at you — then a high chop is needed. The Stinger can only be killed by repeated high chopping — everything else is useless.

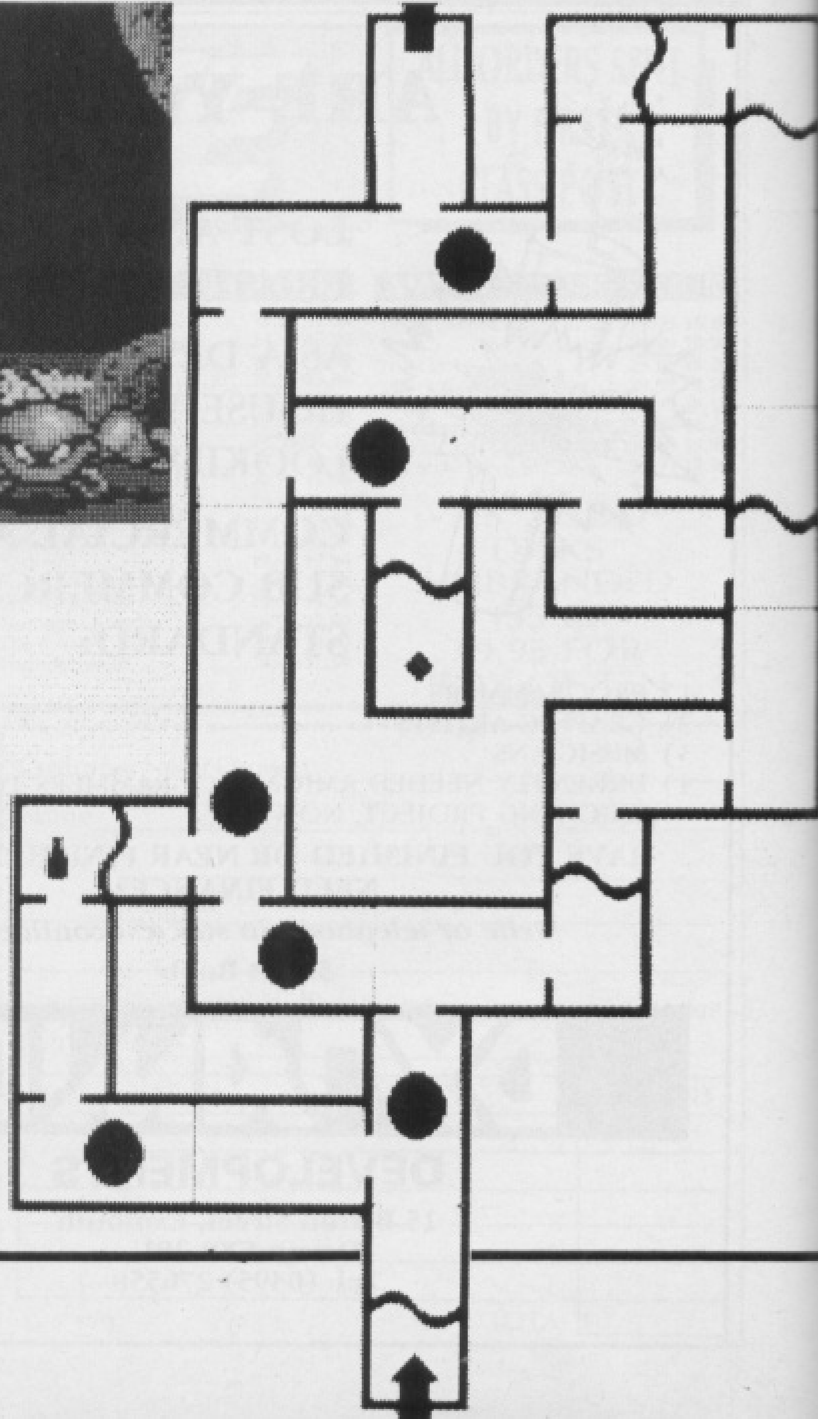




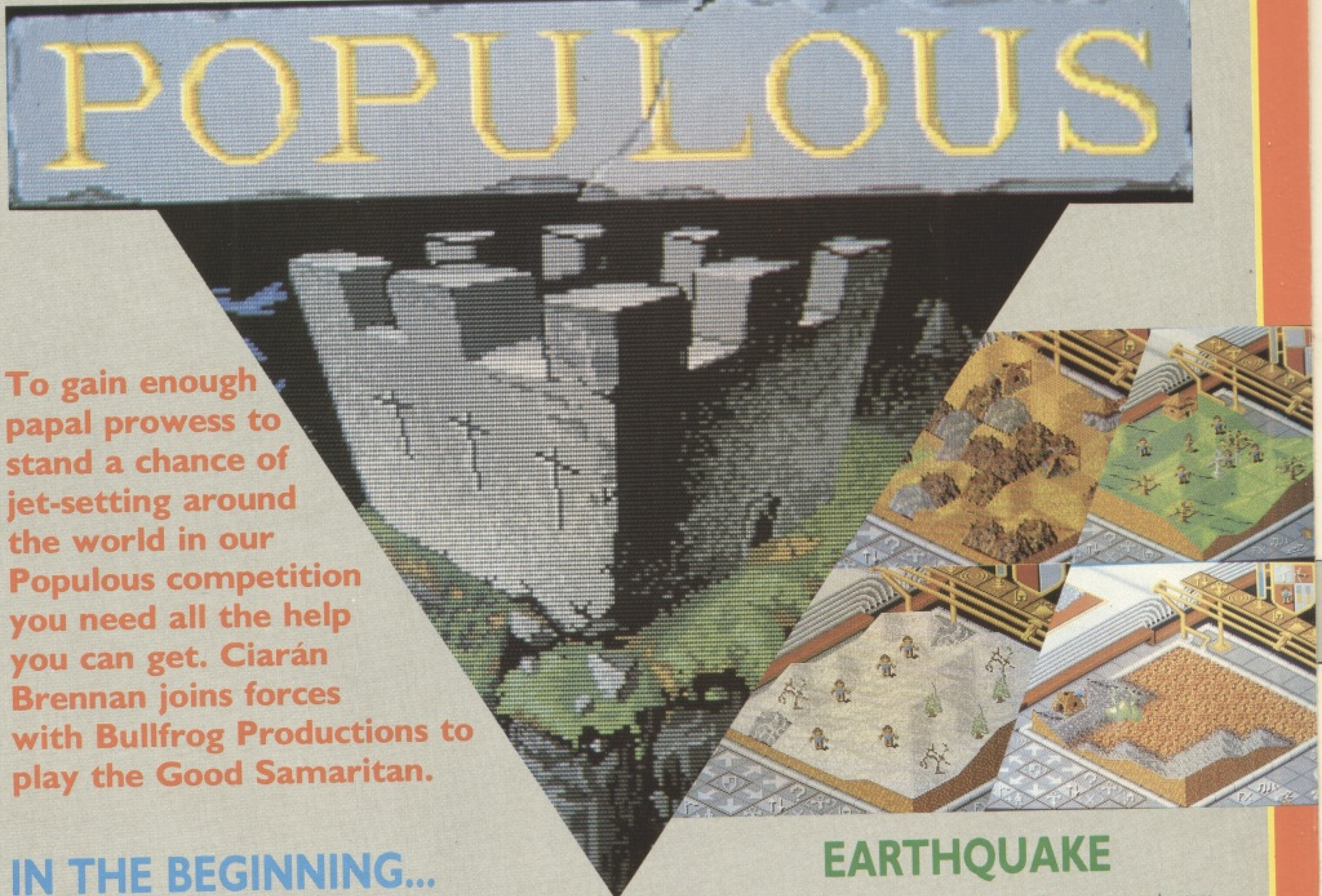
LEVEL ONE







LEVEL TWO



To gain enough papal prowess to stand a chance of jet-setting around the world in our Populous competition you need all the help you can get. Ciarán Brennan joins forces with Bullfrog Productions to play the Good Samaritan.

IN THE BEGINNING...

The beginning of each game is essentially a race – to expand the population and subsequently build up manna (power). The most effective methods of doing so are listed in detail later on and it's up to you to try them out and decide which you prefer. However, there's one technique that you should employ whichever strategy you choose. The Bullfrog boys refer to it as 'sprogging' and basically it speeds up the spread of people across the land.

Once you've got a decent settlement going, a small or large castle for example, leave it for a short while and then infringe upon its land by lowering or raising it. This has the effect of reducing the size of the settlement. If you're lucky, one of your walkers also appears (indicating that the new settlement can't hold all the people that were in the previous one) and goes off to set up home on his own. Now level the land again to restore the settlement and bingo – two settlements on the boil in double jiffy-quick time.

MANNA

The most important aspect, both initially and throughout the game, is the acquisition of manna. The player's power and ability depends entirely on the manna level – from the basic ability to raise and lower land right up to the ability to cause Armageddon.

The most critical stage of development is right at the beginning of the game where the player only barely has the ability to affect the landscape. An advantage gained at this stage can last throughout the game, so it's important to stock up on manna as quickly as possible.

To this end, it's vital that a landscape condusive to building is created by expending as little energy as possible. To achieve this, a 'two steps forward one step back' method is brought into play. This is a clever construction method, making use of both the mouse buttons.

THE ONESY TWOSY

Move the pointer to the designated area, and click twice in succession with the left button. This should leave a small peak. To remove the peak, click once with the right button to reveal a nice flat plot, ripe for colonisation.

Once this tactic is mastered, power should begin to rise steadily allowing the game's more interesting features to be brought into play.

EARTHQUAKE

Earthquakes are more of an inconvenience than a real tactical threat, but if used properly they are effective in slowing the enemy's build-up.

When sufficient power is amassed, search the enemy's territory for the flattest section, then, using the eight-way direction arrows, move about to find the maximum number of settlements visible at one time. Quaking this area causes the optimum amount of aggravation and hopefully gains a slight but important advantage.

Another, rarer, occasion when quakes come in handy is when the enemy plants a volcano on your territory. A quick quake or two is usually enough to bring things back down to earth.

DEFENCE

As always, the best way to look after your own end is to get your shot in first – and the tips contained in the following pages are a short guide on just how to do that. A word of warning though – anything that you can do to the enemy, he can do right back, so keep a close eye on the enemy's power level and constantly try to keep it in check. May your Gods go with you...



SWAMPS

Of all the earlier effects available, the swamping feature is both one of the most difficult to use and one of the most effective when used properly.

Swamps come in two varieties – shallow and bottomless. A shallow swamp sucks under the first person to stand on it and then dries up, while the bottomless variety remains deadly however many people it swallows.

Remember that swamps can only be planted on flat land, so a good precaution is to plant your papal magnet on rugged ground to protect it from being surrounded (likewise it's an even better idea to swamp the opposition's magnet at the earliest opportunity). Surrounding the enemy's magnet with swamp is a clever manoeuvre, but a difficult one to achieve. If you manage this trick, AND get rid of the enemy's magnet carrier, the game's in the bag (but as usual it's far more difficult than it sounds).

Knights can avoid swamps automatically, but a clever opponent can plant a swamp just below a knight's feet and get him that way. The best way to guard against this is to follow a conquering knight with a finger ready on the earthquake button.

A final note of caution is that placing swamps causes a 'sprogging out' in exactly the same way as raising and lowering land – so be extra careful not to lay a swamp too near to your own population.



KNIGHTS

Before creating a knight, make sure that the two armies are connected by land, or if not can be connected without too much trouble – obviously if the armies are separated by water your knight won't be able to make it across.

Knights need to be watched, especially on their journey to the enemy's settlements when they're under most threat from swamp traps. Once they are across and have started attacking they can be more or less left alone, but make regular checks on their progress to be on the safe side.

When you created man, you made them all equal, but knight power varies. A powerful knight lasts longer, works more efficiently and has a higher 'aggro' factor than a weak one. The power of your knight is determined by how many people 'merge' with their leader before he is converted.

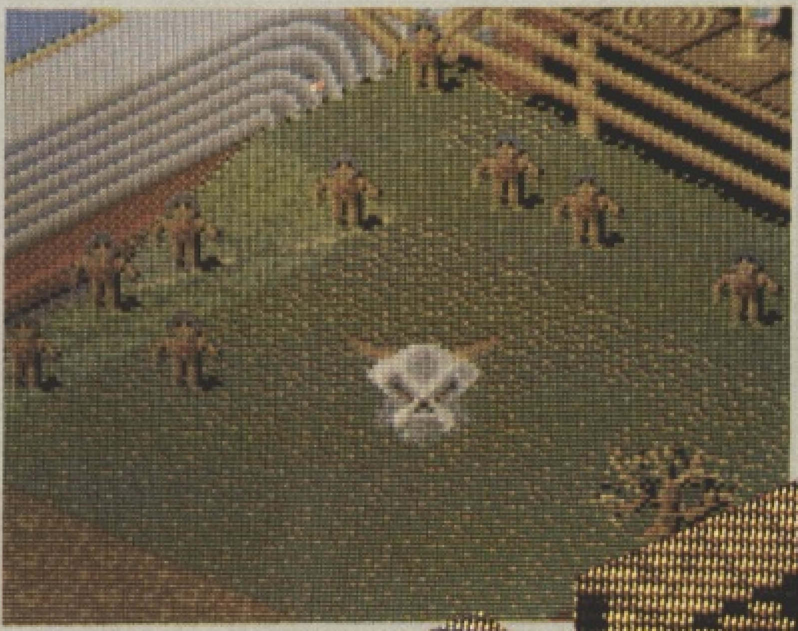
Knights ruin land by burning enemy buildings, so if you intend to colonise the land that your knight is currently roaming, destroy the buildings manually (by raising or lowering the land beneath them) before he gets a chance.

To keep knights apart, create three or four and release them at long intervals so that they operate in different areas.

It's rumoured that there is an effective way to swamp opposition knights, but Bullfrog is remaining remarkably tight-lipped on the subject. For now, anyway.

VOLCANOES

The Volcano, while being pretty devastating in its own right, is even more effective when two or three are laid on top of one another, the reason being the pyramid shape – the higher the peak, the more land it destroys on the way down. So don't scatter your volcanic disruption willy-nilly – piling them up causes much more trouble.









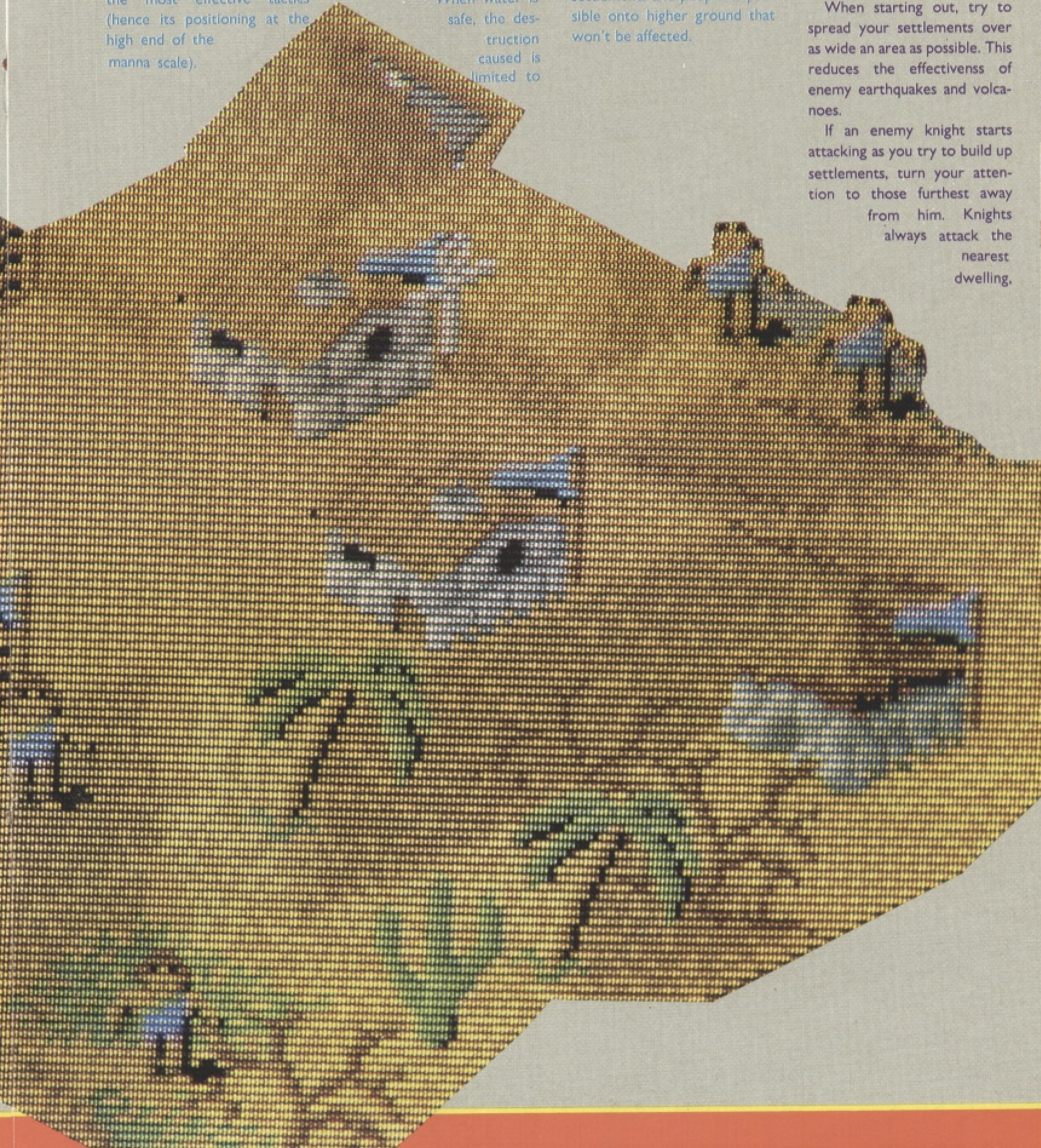


FLOODS

Floods often turn the game around, swinging the power balance in an instant and as such, used properly this one of the most effective tactics (hence its positioning at the high end of the manna scale).

Floods are at their most effective on planets where the water is fatal, whereupon all walkers caught in the flood drown. When water is safe, the destruction caused is limited to wiping out settlements under the flood level.

What a flood does is to drop the entire landscape down one level into the water, so on built up worlds it's normally the shore that suffers most. Low level land (particularly the flat variety) is most vulnerable, so if you think the enemy is about to summon a flood, or you are about to cause one of your own, move as many of your settlements and people as possible onto higher ground that won't be affected.



IN GENERAL

To create two powerful groups instead of one, divide your population in two by digging a narrow channel. Now place your Magnet on either side and set your population to 'go to magnet' mode. Two powerful groups will now form and greatly speed up the process of creating two strong knights.

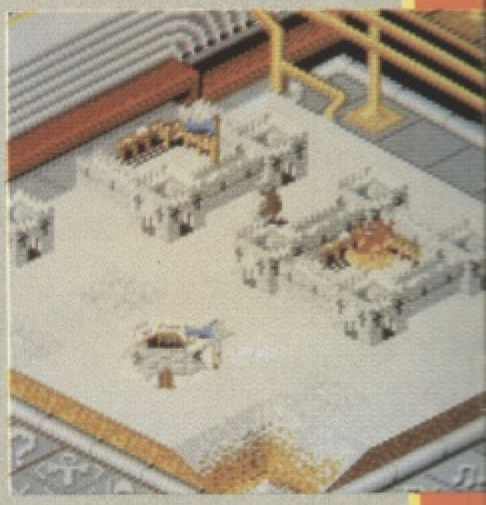
When starting out, try to spread your settlements over as wide an area as possible. This reduces the effectivenss of enemy earthquakes and volcanoes.

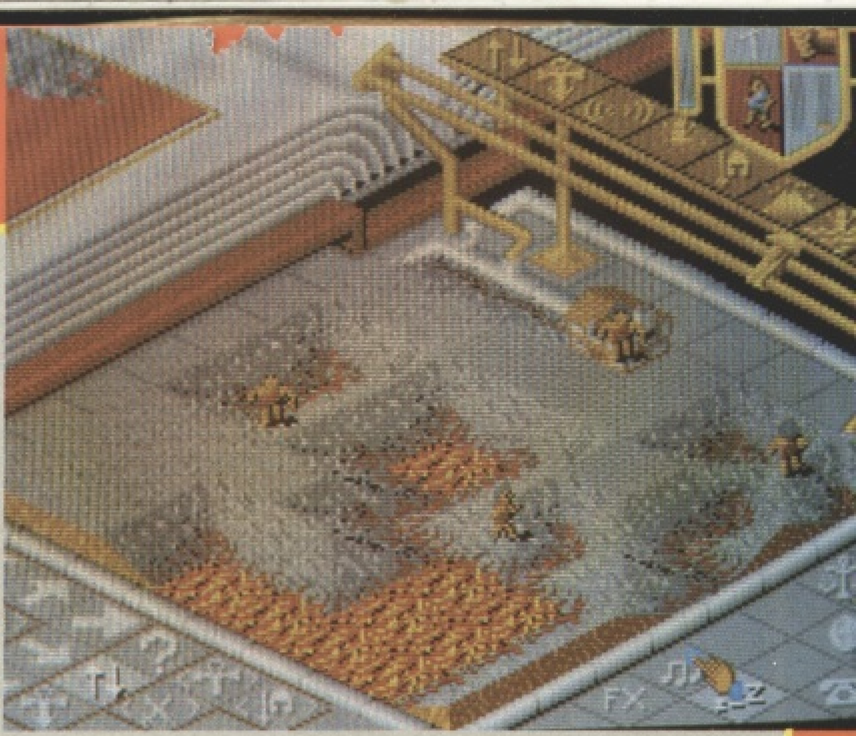
If an enemy knight starts attacking as you try to build up settlements, turn your attention to those furthest away from him. Knights always attack the nearest dwelling, and so it takes him a while to get to your development site – and by then he could well have been killed anyway.

A swamp is invisible when laid under a tree, making it particularly effective against human opponents – you can't get rid of a swamp if you don't know it's there!

Before calling Armageddon, lay a series of swamp traps over the land between your opponent's settlements and the centre of the map, where the papal magnets will be placed. With this method, you can win even if you have less men, as many of his will be killed *en route* to the battle.

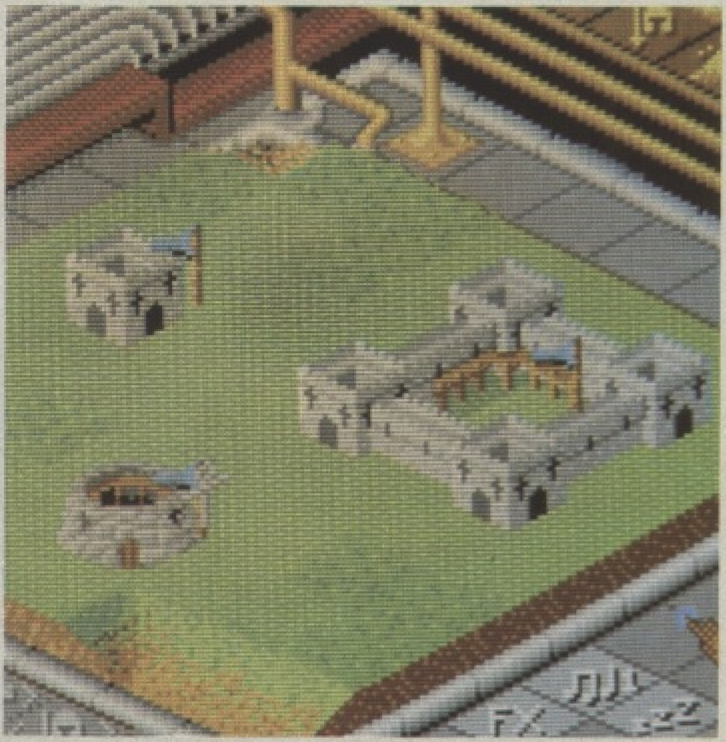
When cultivating land for settlements, bear in mind that Walkers don't head for the nearest piece of flat land in the area, but for the newest – useful for dictating where your people settle.





PLAY STRATEGIES

MILTON KEYNES



As the name suggests, the Milton Keynes strategy is all about massive development with very little planning. There's no great trick involved, simply level as much land as your manna level allows and use the 'sprogging' (turfing out) technique to populate it as quickly as possible.

When complete, a Milton Keynes landscape allows for a quick build-up of manna. On the downside however, it does leave your settlement vulnerable to enemy quakes and volcanoes.



THE MI

The MI strategy is a method of creating sprawling settlements in hostile environments. The idea is to 'turf out' the magnet carrier and cause him to resettle in a site of your choosing (either by placing the magnet or by attracting him towards freshly built land).

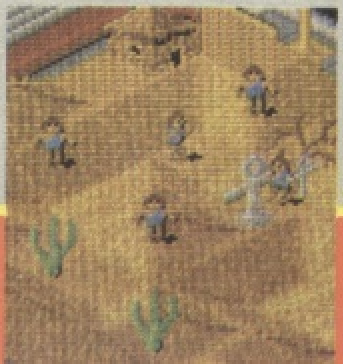
Continue this tactic until you've created a long thin string of small dwellings, then remove the obstacles to allow the settlements to grow.

The reason that this is especially effective in harsher climates that that it allows vast areas to be colonised without sending settlers out to face the elements for long periods.

THE NORFOLK BROADS

Create a flat piece of land in front of your people and lay a mass of swamp traps over the intervening land – this kills off any attacking knights and walkers, but you need to keep an eye on the swamp site in case the enemy tries to build over them.





MONSTROUS CREATIONS

They only appear very rarely, but when they do the sea monsters change the course of the game – for better or worse.

These creatures don't appear entirely at random – there are several factors that effect how and when they appear. They mostly turn up in Conquest mode (they do make appearances in the custom games but only very rarely) and are most likely to appear in the later stages of the game – the program keeps a constant check on the overall population of the world and starts generating the monsters when it thinks it's getting overcrowded.

Where the monsters appear is a different matter. They appear at random, which can prove useful when all seems lost... a monster may appear deep in enemy territory and start to wipe them out from within!

There are five species of monster, and each has its own characteristics. The most common is referred to by Bullfrog as the (ahem) 'testicle monster' (seen here) which roams across the land dropping swamps in its wake.

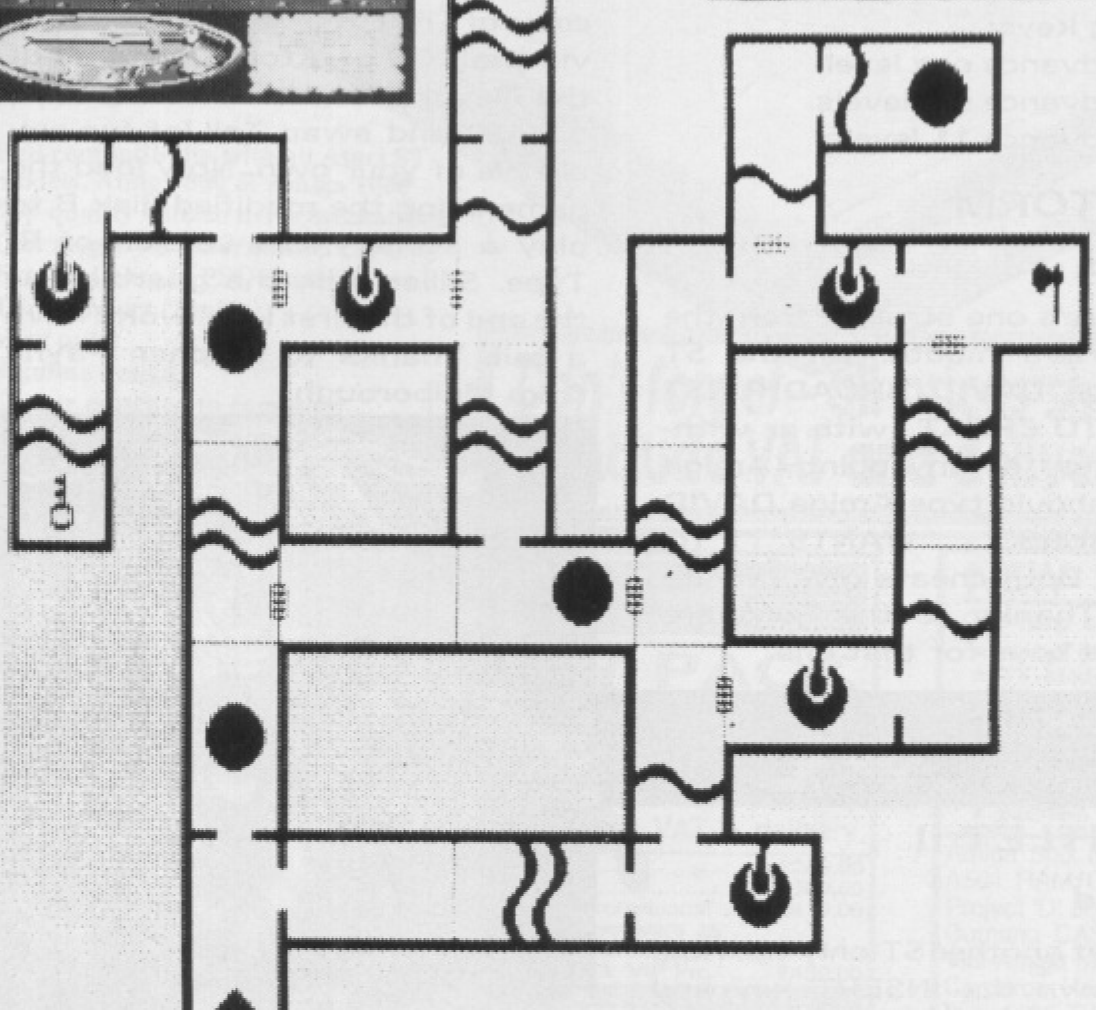
Watch out too for the 'bloop' which lays rocks behind it as it travels, a tree-planter and, believe it or not, a maniacal wizard on a magic carpet!

Different habits aside, the monsters all have one thing in common – they kill anything that gets in their way, be it a walker, knight, leader... nothing is safe. To make matters worse, the beasts are invincible, so once they appear, they hang around for the rest of the game.

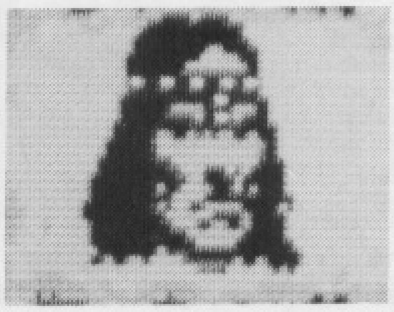
Bullfrog originally toyed with the idea of featuring the monsters on the manna scale, so they could be summoned just like anything else as a kind of 'super-knight', but this was dropped in favour of the random element. As Pete Molyneux says: "It's nice to have something that even the Gods have no control over."

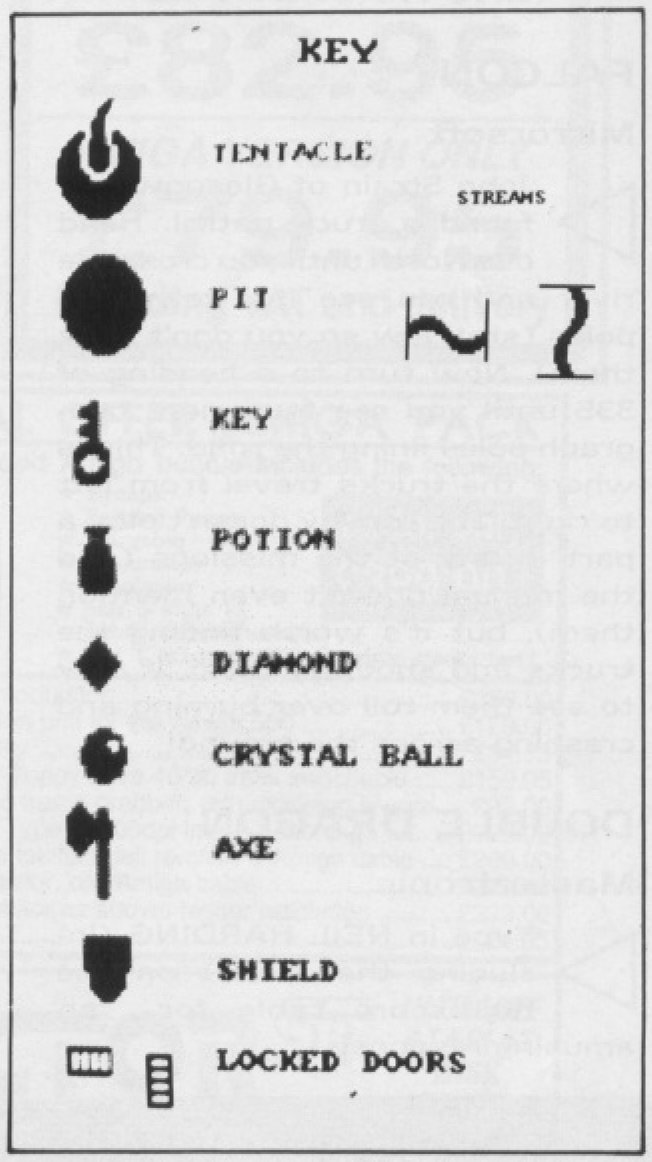




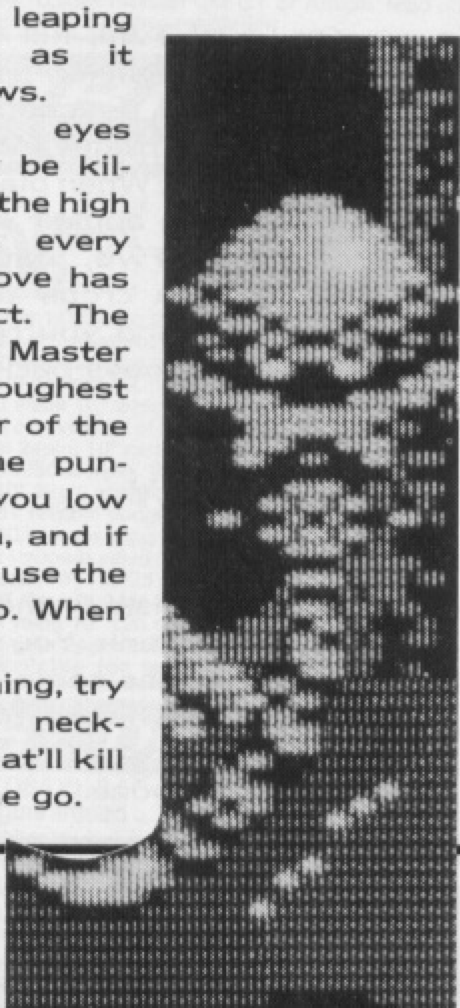


LEVEL THREE

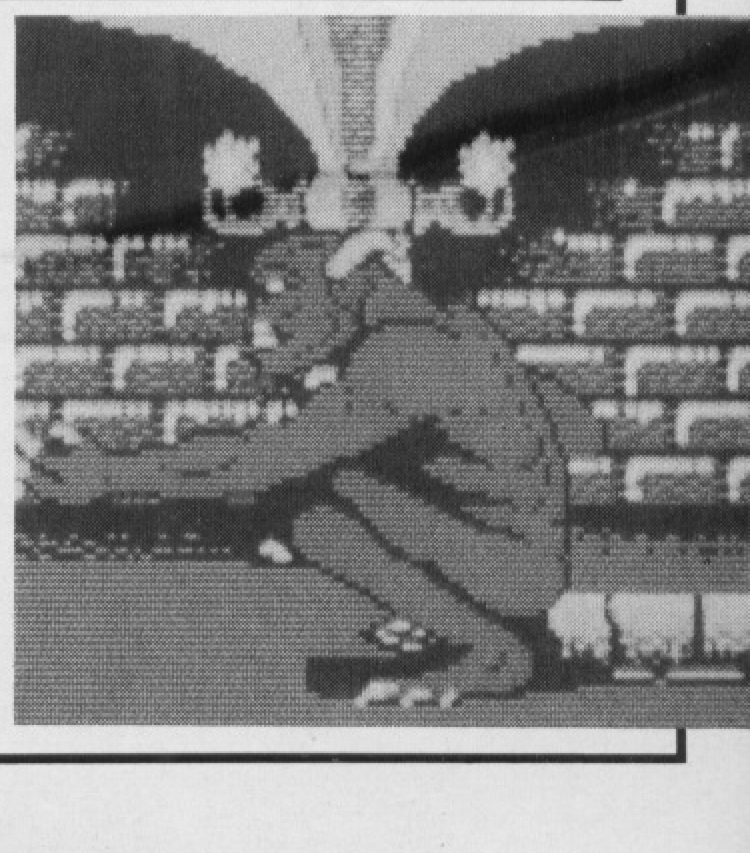




LEVEL THREE. Escape the grabbing tentacle by leaping the pit as it withdraws. Floating eyes can only be killed with the high chop — every other move has no effect. The Dungeon Master is the toughest character of the lot. If he punches at you low chop him, and if he kicks use the high chop. When he's approaching, try a flying neck-chop — that'll kill him in one go.



LEVEL FOUR. The first monster may seem formidable, but in fact is easily dealt with by turning around and walking backwards into it, so you can push your way onto the next screen. This manoeuvre costs energy, but not as much as if you fought the monster head-on. The Great Demon is next. Begin this bout with a flying neck-chop and follow it up with a low chop. If you miss first time, retreat quickly to get out of his range and repeat. In a similar fashion to the original, the final confrontation in Barbarian II is with the evil Drax himeself. The place to stand is directly in front of the hanging corpse on the wall. From here you're in perfect position to execute a flying neck chop — the only move that will finish the job.



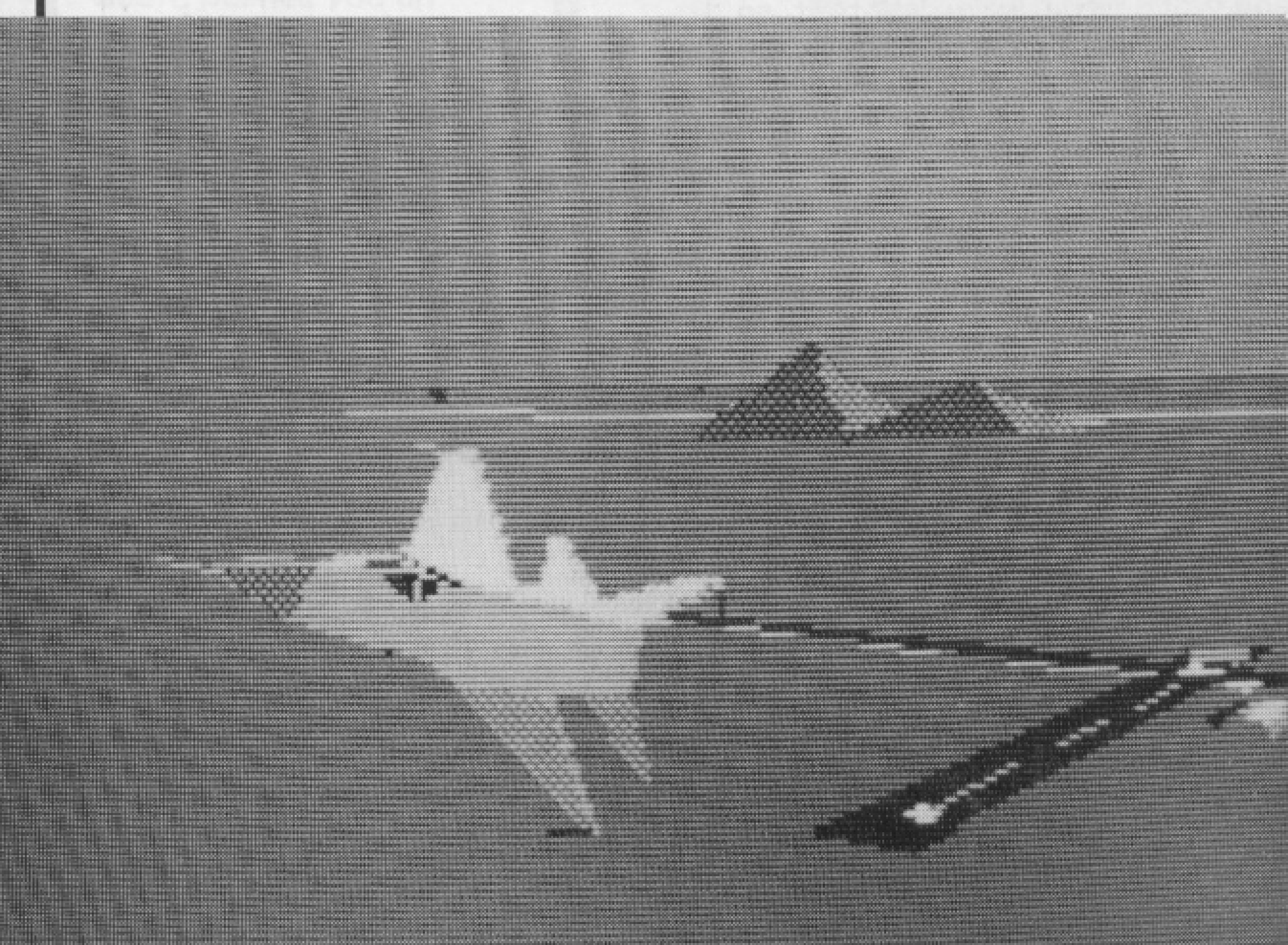
TIPS

FALCON
Mirrorsoft

John Strain of Glasgow has found a truck patrol. Head due North until you cross the river and can see five telegraph poles (stay low so you don't miss them). Now turn to a heading of 335 until you see four more telegraph poles lining the road. This is where the trucks travel from left to right. The convoy doesn't play a part in any of the missions (and the manual doesn't even mention them), but it's worth finding the trucks and shooting them, if only to see them roll over burning and crashing across the ground!

DOUBLE DRAGON
Mastertronic

Type in NEIL HARDING (including the space) on the high-score table for... an amusing response.

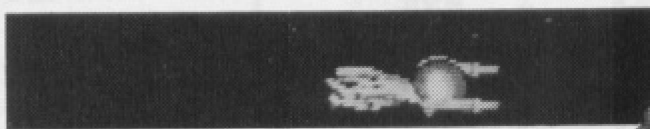


BUBBLE BOBBLE
Firebird

Another ST-only tip, this time from Keith Pyper in Sterling. During play hit the following keys:
F2 to advance one level.
F3 to advance six levels.
F4 to advance 11 levels.

LED STORM
US Gold

Here's one straight from the horse's mouth. On the ST type DAVID BROADHURST WANTS TO CHEAT (with or without spaces) at any point (Amiga owners should type Amiga DAVID BROADHURST WANTS TO CHEAT). Both cheats give infinite energy. Thanks to the Software Creations boys for that one.

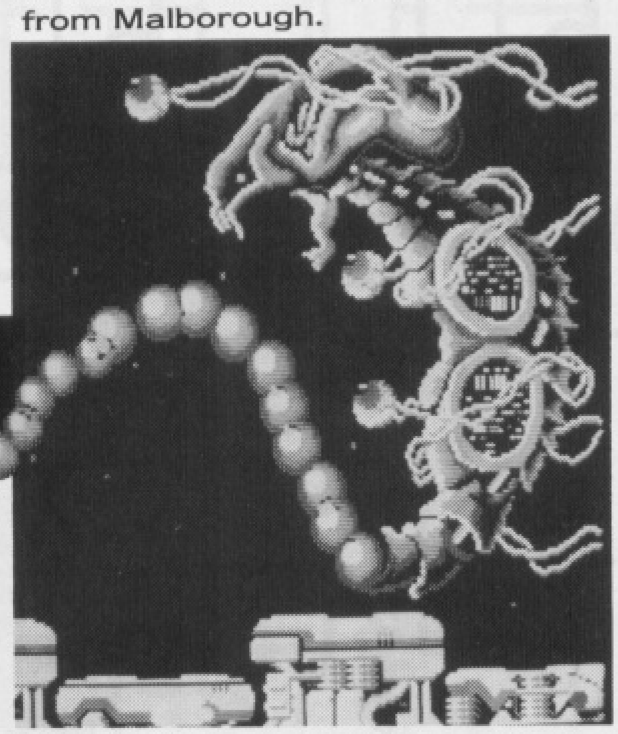


GAUNTLET II
US Gold

Yet another ST-only tip. Hold down the INSERT key and open a treasure chest. Now release INSERT and hold down HELP while opening another and your health level increases to 50,000. Thanks to Dave Dashper from Slough.

R-TYPE
Electric Dreams

ST owners looking for a little help in their efforts against Bydo should make a back-up copy of Disk B and then access it via the TOS desktop. Delete all of the files that end in .MAP (eg: Levl 1.MAP) and swap Tail.Inf for any old file of your own. Now load the game using the modified disk B to play a scenery-less version of R-Type. Sillier still, the guardian at the end of the first level won't have a tail. Thanks to Stephen Payne from Malborough.



XENON
Melbourne House

On Level Two, kill the first guardian (easier said than done) and as soon as it's gone, crash into the nearest available wall and die. When play begins again, no aliens appear until the end of Level Two, where the second guardian crops up. Once he's destroyed and you reach the third level, play goes back to normal.

POWERPLAY
Arcana

Remove Disk B and replace it with a blank. You will now be asked the same question on every turn. Thanks to Steven White from Consett in Country Durham for that one.

Clik

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COMPETITION



Here's your chance to win a Thomson Holidays trip to Russia and see how the other half lives. Spend three nights in Moscow and visit the Lenin Museum, the Moscow Circus and the Kremlin (the boys may even let you look around inside).

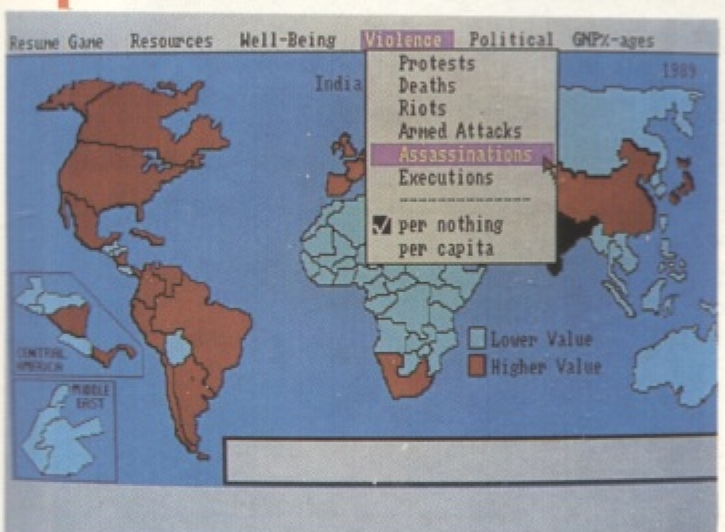
American software publisher Mindscape recently redistributed its balance of power by setting up shop in the UK. The balance of power between the superpowers is the subject of one of its first releases (reviewed on page 34), and also the subject of this competition.

Balance Of Power 1990 T-Shirts and software are up for grabs for 10 runners-up, while another 50 runners-up can have a poster each.

Please Note: entries must arrive before the May 26th.



WIN A TRIP FOR TWO TO RUSSIA



COURTESY OF MINDSCAPE

1 In the West, Russia is often referred to as the USSR. However, the Russians use four different letters for the same purpose – what are they?
2 What is NATO's Eastern Equivalent?
3 The 'Cuban Missile Crisis' was the closest that the world has ever come to total nuclear conflict. In what year did it happen?
4 Mindscape's next product, American Ice Hockey, **will feature realistic sporting action – right down to the strong physical interaction. In the real thing, what's the name of the box where players who take things too far serve their penalty?**

TIE-BREAKER

Now that Glasnost is the acceptable face of communism, come up with a Gorby gag to get us giggling.

NAME ....

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TELEPHONE ....

Send your entry to MINSCAPE MIRTH, The One, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, LONDON EC1R 3AU.

SMALL PRINT

- Employees of Mindscape and The One and their friends and relatives may not enter.
- The tour MUST be taken between November 4th and December 26th (due to the funny Russian tourist season).
- The flight MUST be taken from Heathrow (Mindscape will pay travelling expenses to and from the airport).
- Entrants under the age of 18 MUST be accompanied by a parent or guardian.
- The trip can only be made subject to the acquisition of the necessary visas.
- In the event of a tie, the judges' decision is final.

Typhoon T

In The Search For T



Great things are promised as the classic US 8-bit publisher Broderbund joins with Domark to release a range of 16-bit products. But first Ciarán Brennan finds himself stranded in a rubber dinghy with the world's smallest hero.

Typhoon arrives at the seascape, ready to begin his adventure... or is he? It would appear that Mr Thompson is a reluctant hero, and any one of three methods of persuation has to be used to get him into his dinghy and under way.



First stop is the home of the Spirit Guardians, where TT is doused in flame, given his mission and allowed the use of a single weapon. As the diminutive hero completes his missions he returns to the Guardians to receive his next (more difficult) mission and a more sophisticated weapon.

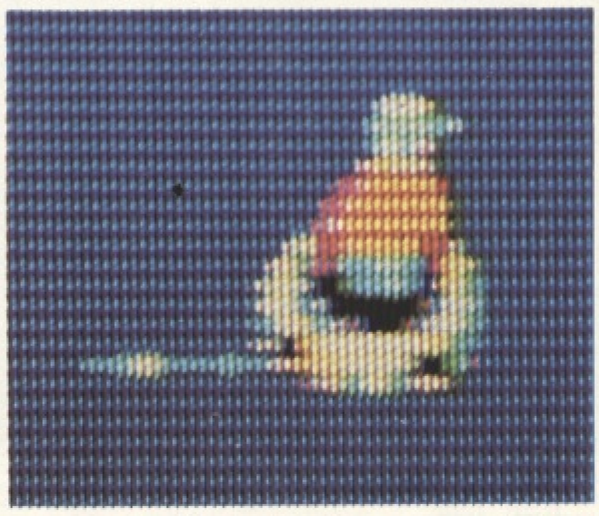


Love is a peculiar thing. It comes in many forms: the love of a boy for his dog, the love between brothers... or the love of a planet full of Sea Sprites for a stranded human child.

Unfortunately you've got no time for contemplating sentimental trash like this as you've been given the job of flying to the planet in question, Aguar, and bringing the child back to its rightful parents.

Three Jet Sleds have been left behind by the last team who tried to achieve this, and Spirit Guardians from Aguar's long-dead civilisation will help you in your quest. The rest is up to you.

You are Typhoon Thompson.



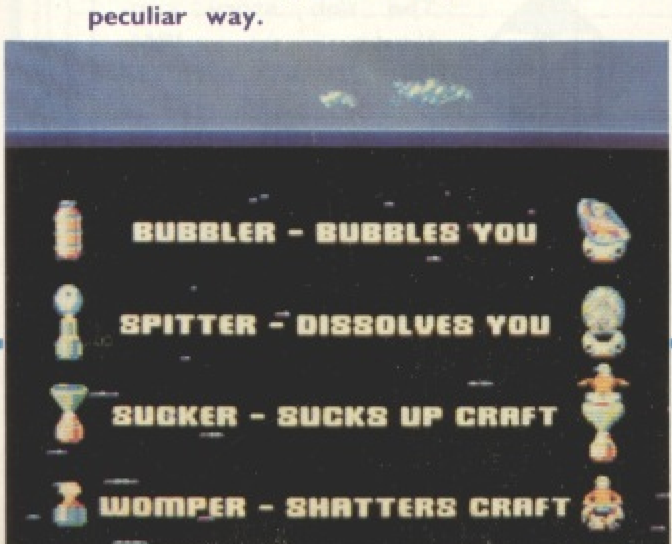
The Jet Sled is mouse controlled, with everything from speed, direction and angle of shot taken care of. This is quite difficult to get to grips with, but once it's mastered, this is one of the best control methods yet employed.

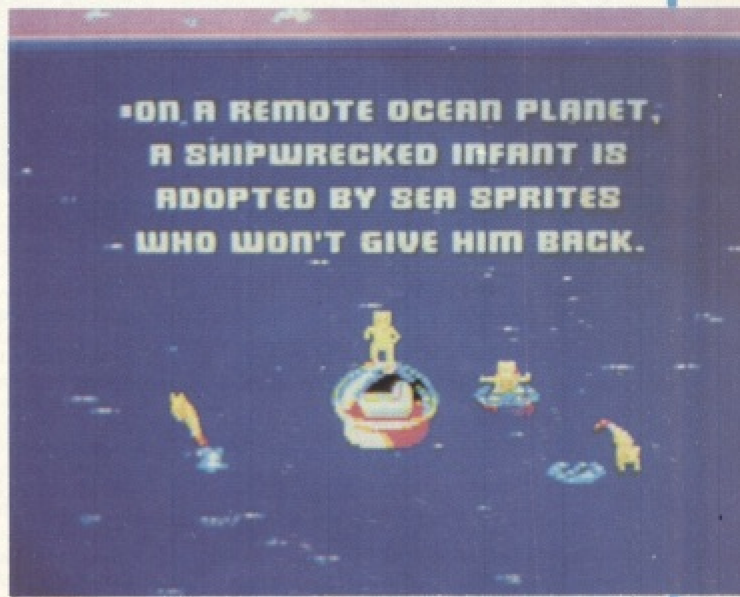
Thompson
The Sea Child



Off on the far horizon lies one of four island villages, with each of these in effect being a single game level. Each Village contains seven small buoys, grouped around a large white buoy – the Treasury Dome. Ramming the smaller buoys reveals the first set of adversaries. The Flyers – the amount released from each buoy increasing with every level.

There are seven different types of Flyer nipping around the ocean, each attempting to destroy TT in its own peculiar way.

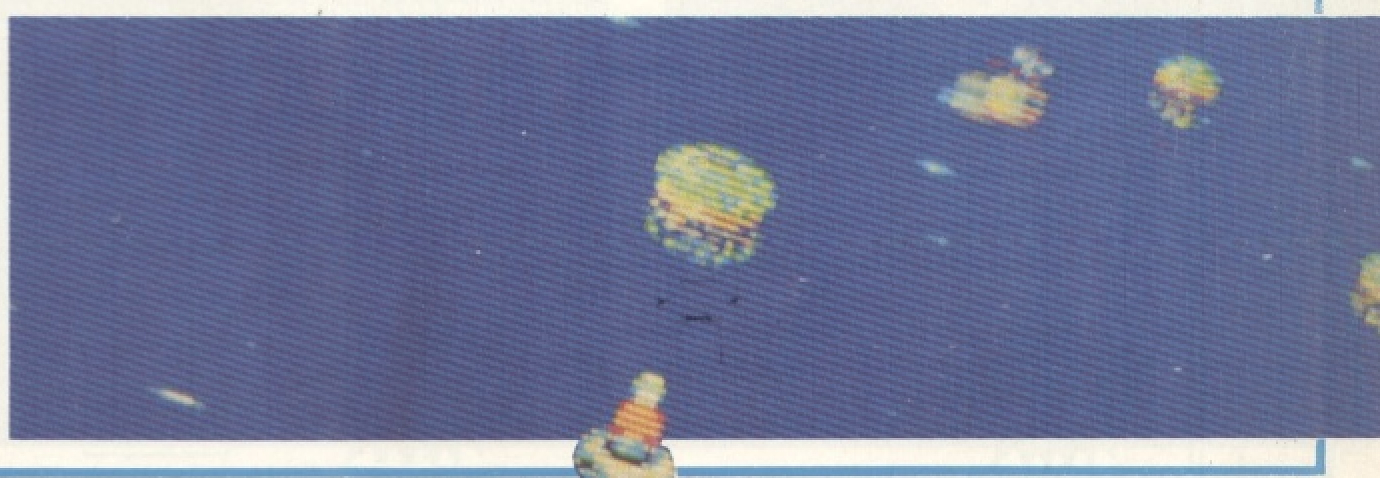




In true Broderbund style, Typhoon Thompson is superbly presented. An attract sequence introduces the scenario and the main adversaries before presenting a quick demo of the gameplay – all in an entertaining and informative way. Furthermore, the high score table features a useful detailed break-down on your performance: not just what score you achieved, but how you achieved it and how long it took.

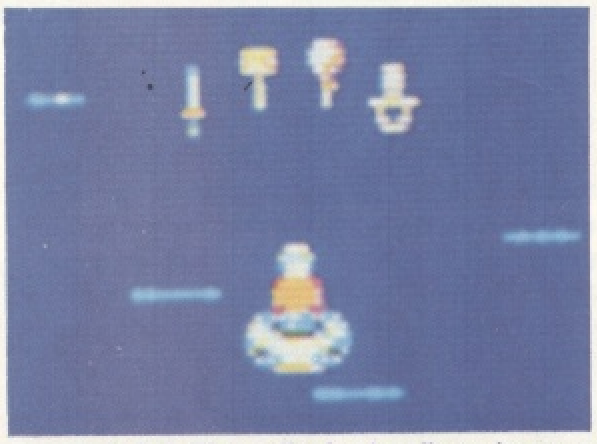


Wayward Sprites can be rounded up by using Sprite Magnets. Typhoon doesn't earn this useful weapon until the third level, but by then he really needs it.





Shooting a Flyer reveals its occupant... a Sprite, the object of TT's desire. TT's job is to hover above these and scoop them into his bag. This is easier said than done, and should TT leave the Sprites too long however, they turn into fish and attempt to swim back to the island from whence they came. To complete a level, TT has to collect every Sprite – easy enough on the first level, but wait until there's six of the little beggars in the water at once!



When all of a level's sprites are 'in the bag', TT drives to the Treasury Dome to swap his captives for the object that he's hunting: either a Knife, a Balloon, a Hammer or a baby's Dummy. The keeper of the treasury isn't too happy about handing these over, but he's got no choice and as soon as the job is done TT hops back into his dinghy and heads for the Guardian Spirits to begin his next mission.



California-based Broderbund was formed in 1980 by two brothers – Doug and Gary Carlston. Their aim: to launch the software equivalent of a book publisher. Just to keep things in the family, their sister Catherine joined them a year later. Now the 'family' has grown to well over 200.

Despite a healthy mixed bag of award winning products ranging from The Print Shop-style utilities to Typhoon Thompson arcade-esque affairs, Broderbund's presence on these shores went largely unnoticed – until Sega produced a coin-op version of one of the company's most prestigious releases ... Choplifter.

The horizontally scrolling shoot 'em up in which the player controls a chopper on a mission to rescue hostages was graphically more accomplished on the coin-op machine, but the immense playability of Dan Gorlin's original shone through. Anyone familiar with this classic probably won't be surprised to learn that Dan also wrote the equally addictive Typhoon Thompson.

Sadly, most of Broderbund's brilliant 8-bit back catalogue is unlikely to see the light of a 16-bit. This is unfortunate for more than one reason, but mainly because there is a definite place in the current games market for Broderbund's style of highly-playable, if graphically unimpressive, programs. Just for the record, some of the company's most impressive games include ...

Choplifter (arguably a forerunner to FTL's Oids, Lode Runner (a graphically unimpressive but highly-addictive 'platform and ladders' affair with overtones of the ageing coin-op classic Space Panic – thankfully this is to appear on 16-bit), Raid On Bungeling Bay (a brilliant multi-directional scrolling shoot 'em up in which you attempt to destroy enemy forces with a highly-manoeuvrable chopper), Spelunker (a graphically-crude but immensely-playable exploration game set in a vast cavern), Stealth (a mediocre 3D shoot 'em up in the mould of the Buck Rogers coin-op), and Karateka (a beautifully-crafted but sadly sluggish martial arts mini-movie of sorts – which should also be available over here soon).

But is Broderbund likely to produce a series of Typhoon Thompson adventures? It all depends ...

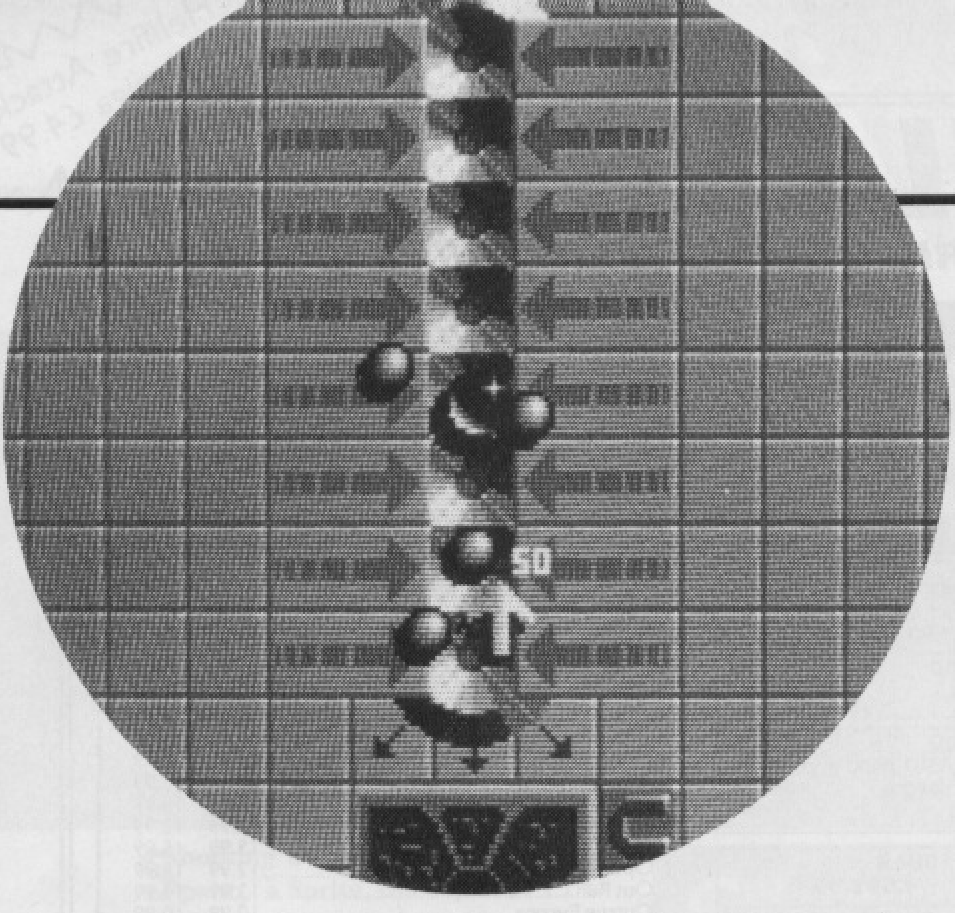
ST If ever proof was needed that good gameplay doesn't necessarily need dazzling sights and sounds to match, then this superbly designed game is it. True, the characters are hopelessly diminutive, but despite this there's never any confusion as to what's what and the fluid animation soon causes the player to forget that he's dealing with only a handful of pixels. The clever use of animation is an example to graphic artists everywhere, and likewise the imaginative use of what is essentially a limited and unimaginative range of sound effects shows the way a soundtrack should be put together. While each sound is uninteresting in its own right, no two are exactly the same and eventually the sounds begin to act as an aural guide to what's going on in the game. And to wrap it all up, the control method is superb – especially the use of both mouse buttons to launch and fire the weapons. Everything about Typhoon Thompson is classy, professional and features the fundamental principles which make great computer games great – and it's extremely playable to boot. Brilliant. It's a shame there's only five levels.

PRICE	£19.99
RELEASE DATE	Out Now
GRAPHICS	92%
SOUND	91%
PLAYABILITY	91%
VALUE	78%

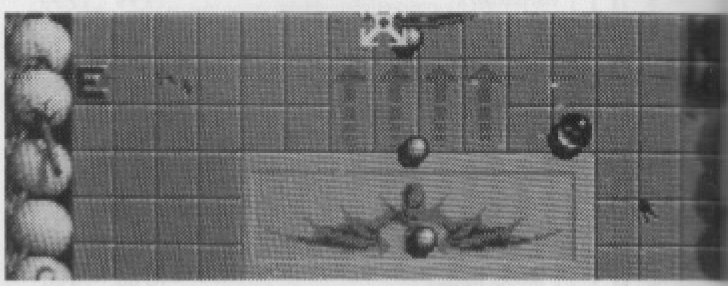
OVERALL 88%

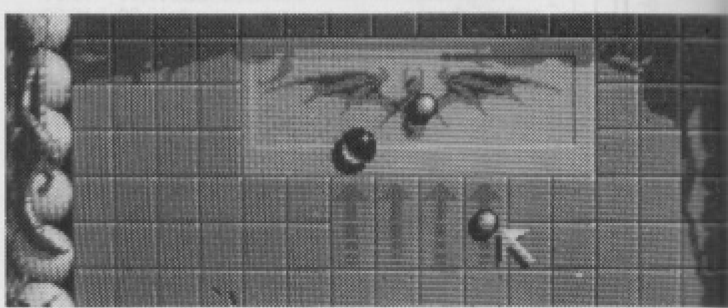
A Sorry Amiga-mates, it's doubtful as to whether Broderbund and Domark are ever going to release a version of this wonderful product for your machine. A final decision won't be known until late summer at the earliest, but expect the worst.

PC The sob story continues, as IBM-compatible owners are also to be denied a chance to guide Typhoon through his quest, despite the fact that this is an American sourced product. Come on guys, this is discrimination!



Balli





Psyclapse's latest is a bat and ball game with a difference... the bat's been replaced by balls! Paul Presley gets caught in the crossfire.

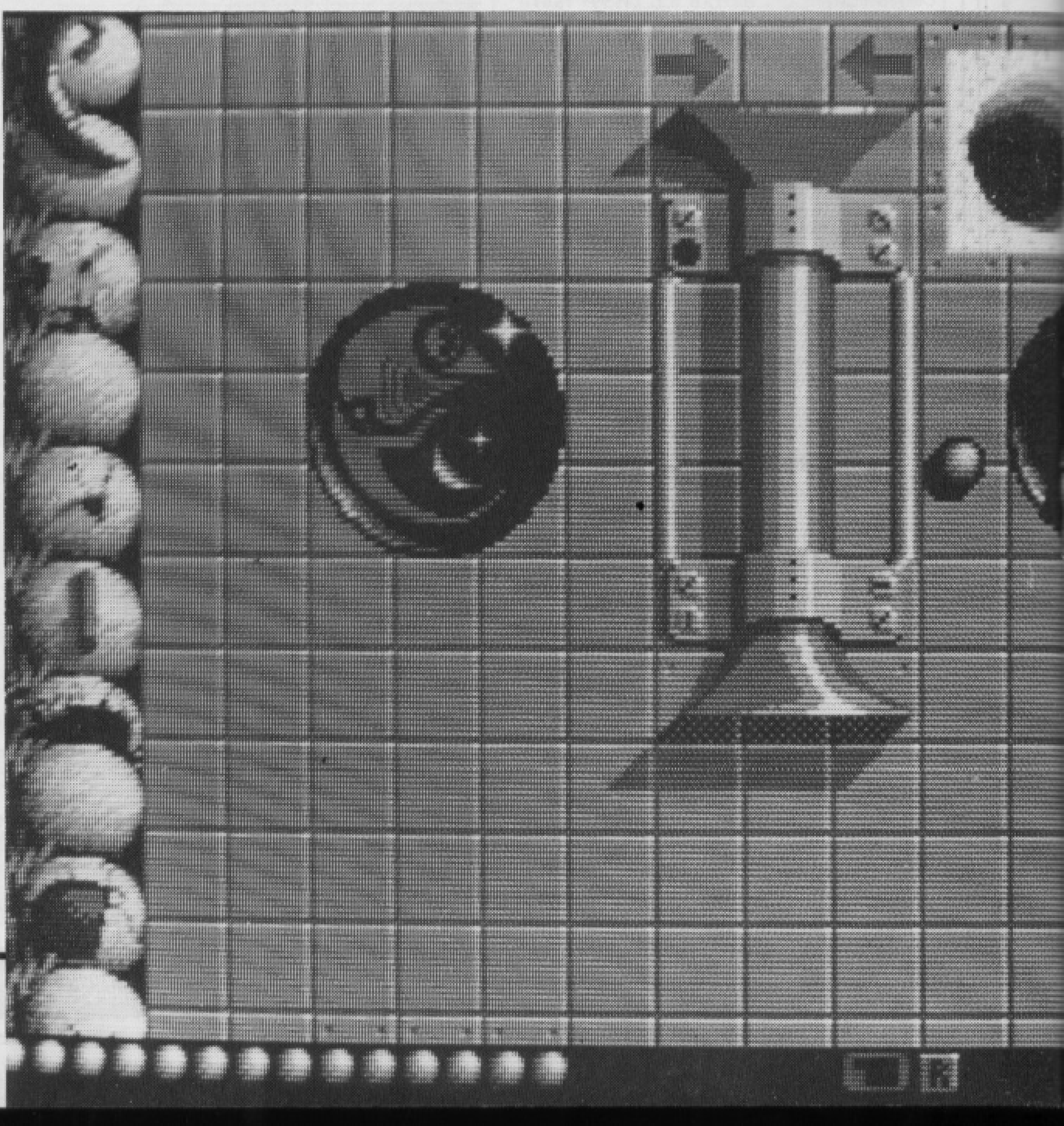
Computers and ball games seem to go hand in hand. Pong started something many have tried to finish. But why are these games so popular? Perhaps it's the challenge of trying to manoeuvre an object that you have no direct control over, or perhaps it's the fact that they simulate something that you can actually play for real. Whatever the reason, ball games have been a staple part of the computer gameplayer's diet.

In a similar fashion to the 'classic' Christmas-advertised family game, Crossfire, **Ballistix** is played on a flat pitch with a goal at either end and an oversized game ball manipulated by a stream of smaller balls fired from both ends.

The aim is simply to score a definable number of goals before your opponent – either human or computer. Some levels feature obstacles which hinder the ball, while a range of tiles pop up to provide bonuses on others. There are 130 levels to play (50 in one player mode and 80 for two players), but for those that still can't find enough variety, a gameplay editor accessed from the title screen allows you to make (mostly cosmetic) tweaks, such as ball speed and the number of balls fired at a time.

Different levels provide different combinations of obstacles: Rubber Bands, Magnets, Sloping Floors, Hyperspace Tunnels, Acid Pools and Miniature Mazes can all show up. Whatever their nature, obstacles either work for or against you. ▶

There are two different ways to manipulate the game balls. The first uses an arrow cursor to release a stream of balls, while the second uses a cross-hair to direct a similar stream – this one emanating from the goalmouth. The balls either disappear after a set time or roll out of pockets at the ends of the pitch. ▶

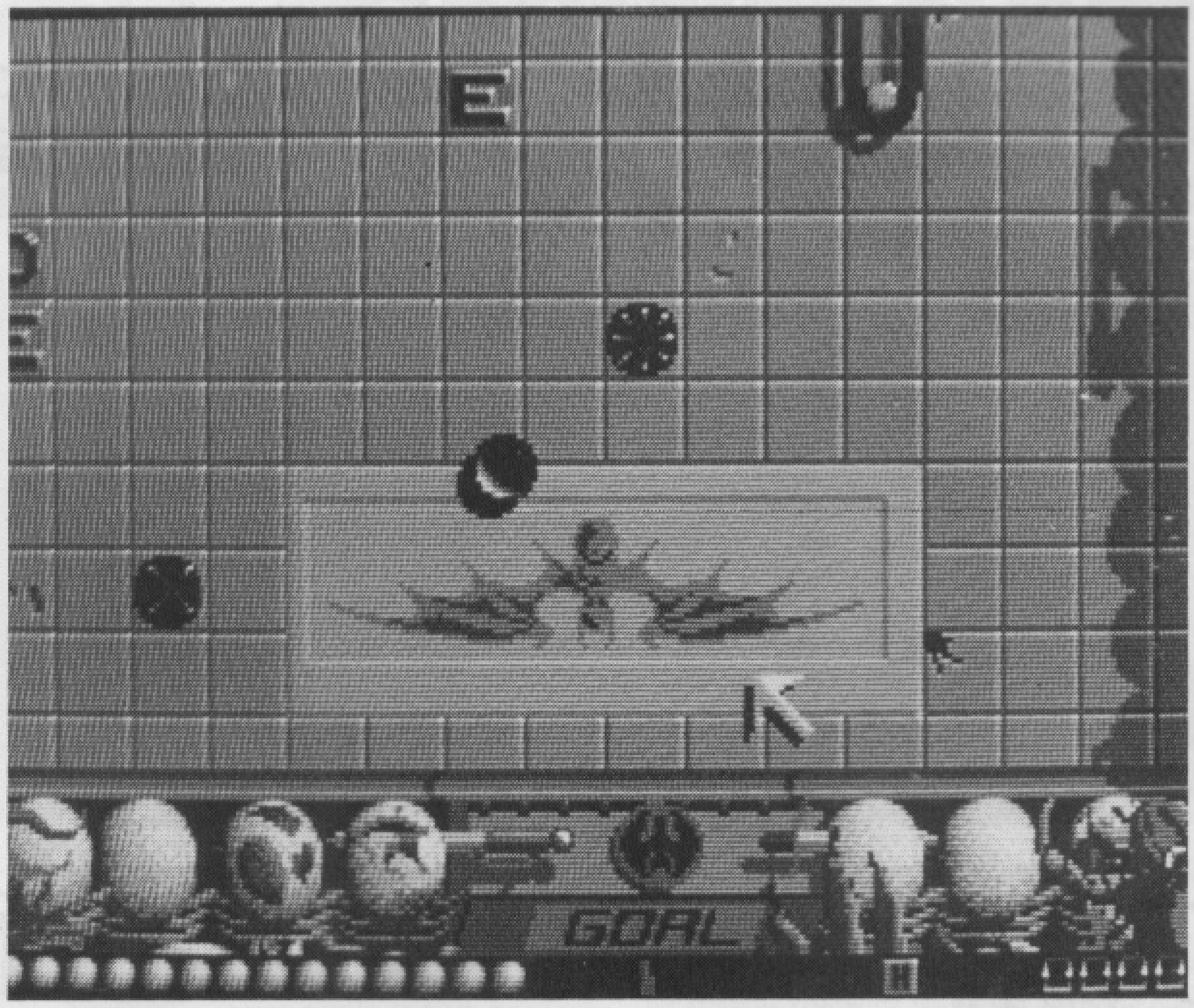


stix

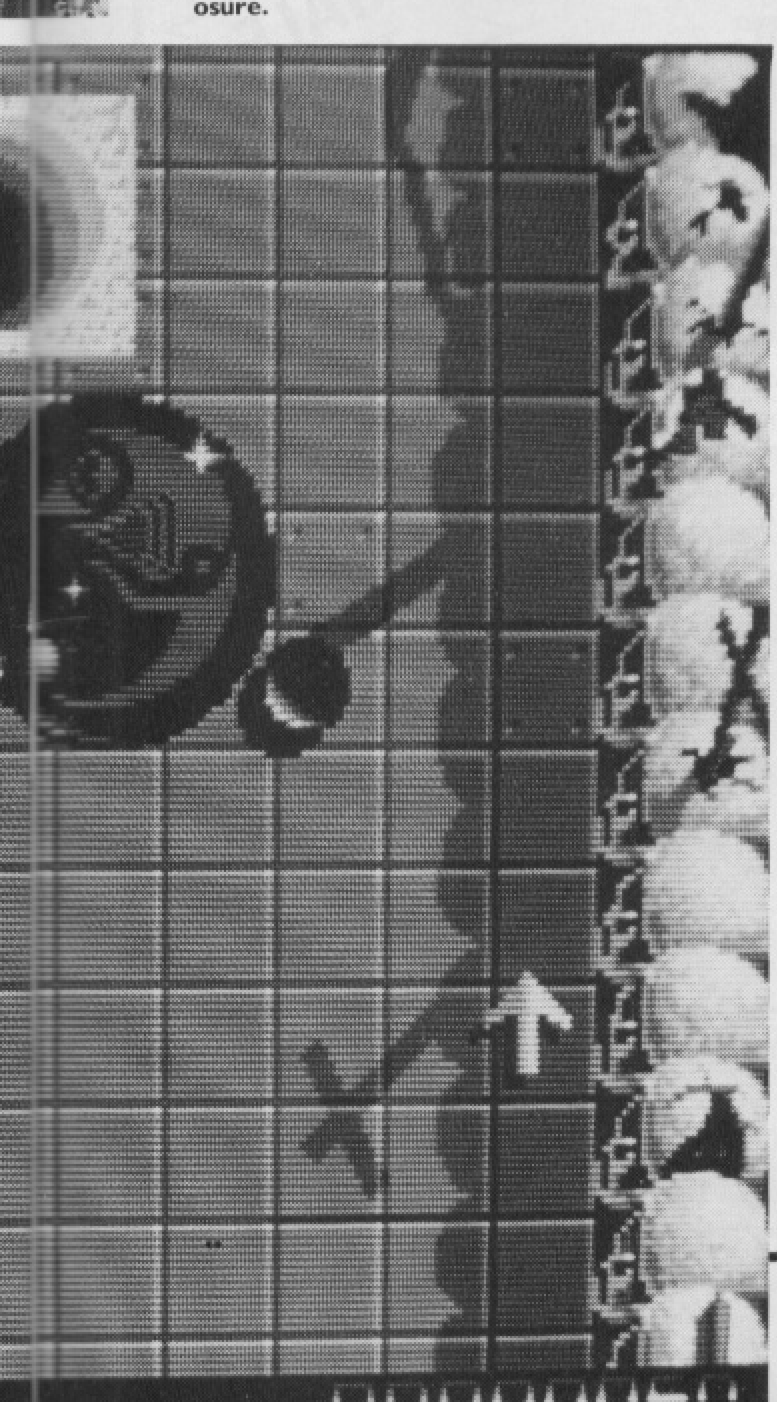




A gastly official hovers above the pitch to announce the kick off. This ghoulish theme is carried on throughout – even the crowd is in a general state of decomposure.



Decorated floor tiles release bonuses when hit. Numbers give bonus points and letters are collected to spell the word RICOCHET for a large bonus. Useful features include a temporary goalmouth shield and 16 balls flying off in all directions.



A Cosmetically impressive software seems to be the Psygnosis/Psyclapse trademark, but unfortunately the playability rarely meets the same high standards. Ballistix isn't quite such a disaster, but it's still far from perfect. Speedball springs to mind at first glance, but it doesn't take long to realise that the similarity is skin deep. Shooting the 'puck' is a frustrating process as precision is taken to extreme degrees, but perseverance is the order of the day and once the control system is mastered Ballistix proves entertaining. As strange as it may seem, the two player option is less enjoyable as the proceedings become too frantic and the play area too cluttered. Ballistix is playable enough in the short term but lacks that vital addictive quality which brings you back for more.

PRICE	£19.99
RELEASE DATE	Out Now
GRAPHICS	76%
SOUND	68%
PLAYABILITY	69%
VALUE	62%

OVERALL 64%

ST A cheering crowd sample is the sonic highlight, but this appears to have been achieved at the expense of the rest of the sound which is mediocre at best. Graphic detail is limited but commendable, and the feel and gameplay are identical to the Amiga incarnation.

PRICE	£19.99
RELEASE DATE	Out Now
GRAPHICS	74%
SOUND	59%
PLAYABILITY	69%
VALUE	62%

OVERALL 64%

PC A version *is* planned, but no firm details, price or release date are fixed at present. Rest assured that you'll receive further details as we receive them.

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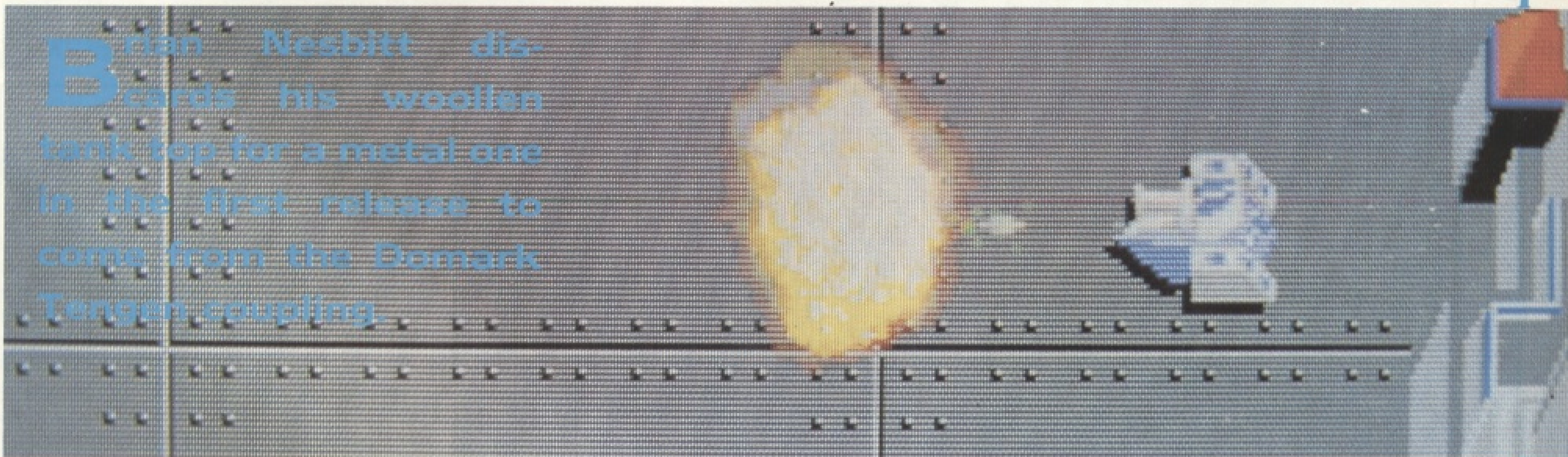
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Vindicators



Brian Nesbitt discards his woollen tank top for a metal one in the first release to come from the Domark Tengen coupling.



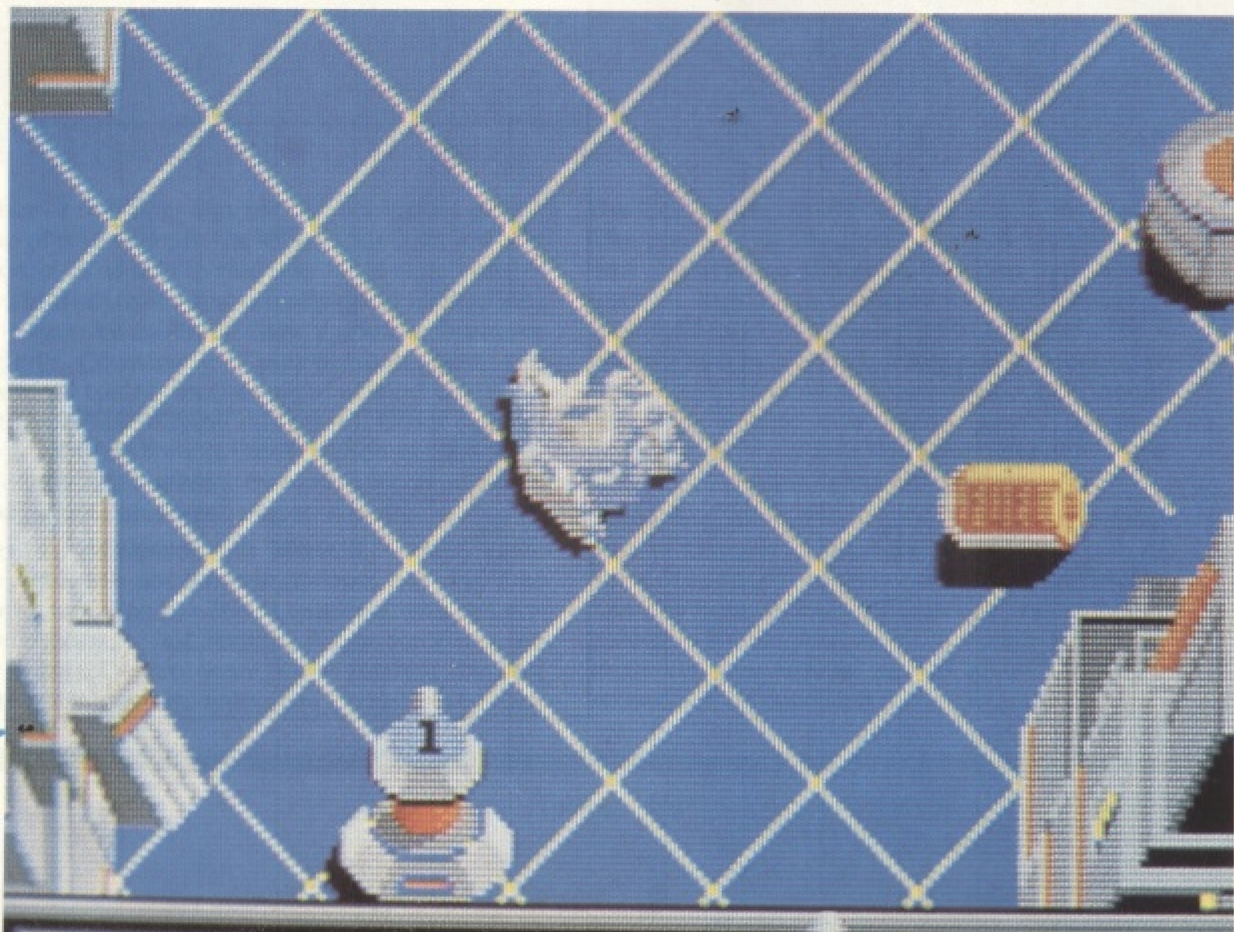
Each enemy space station is divided into four levels, and to complete it, keys must be found to open emergency exits to the next.

Once again the free solar system is under threat from an evil force from another galaxy, and once again it's up to you to save it. This time the bad guys are the invading forces of the despotic Tangent Empire and humanity's last hope rests in the hands of an SR-88 Strategic Battle Tank. But it's not necessarily a one-man mission...

Whether you go in alone or you take a chum with you, the task ahead is by no means easy. The Tangent invasion fleet comprises of 14 multi-directional scrolling, multi-level battle cruisers, all of which must be destroyed to stop the impending attack.

The Tangent space stations are fully automated so there's no human adversaries to fight. Instead the threat comes from each station's computerised security system. Trundling tanks and hovering hunter ships patrol the station floors, and rotating laser turrets are tactically scattered about the place to make the going even tougher.





Dealing with some of the more menacing enemies – such as force fields, hovering hunters and two-tier laser turrets which continue blasting even after their lower portion has been shot away – requires the use of heavy artillery. Smart Bombs track the nearest enemy and NEVER miss (most effective against the airborne enemies that can't be hit with the conventional cannon) while the Bomb Cannon works best against the ground-based tanks and turrets. Shame you have to dive for the space bar to fire them though.







Between levels there's the opportunity to trade in the star tokens collected earlier on to customise your tank. The range speed, and power of your shots can be increased, the tank sped up (useful for getting out of those tight situations) and shield power strengthened, making fuel last that bit longer.



No keys are needed to complete the fourth level – the only way out is via the reactor control centre. After blasting your way through you're given just 10 seconds to collect all the stars and fuel cannisters and get out before the station explodes.



ST Domark's conversion is commendably accurate in every aspect, but because of this it has one major flaw – a lack of varied action. The coin-op is playable enough, sure, but trundling around the space stations, collecting keys and tokens and shooting the enemy isn't all that exciting. The slow gameplay limits the combat to an exchange between you and the enemy until either of you explodes, while the extra weaponry isn't innovative enough to compensate. Excitement is heightened when a second player is involved, with a sense of competition when it comes to collecting the much-needed fuel cannisters and weapon tokens. You can forget about shooting each other though, as this transfers your fuel to your partner – a neat touch, especially when one of you is about to meet his maker. Vindicators strength is that if its simplicity appeals, there's plenty to keep you going.

PRICE	£19.99
RELEASE DATE	Out Now
GRAPHICS	75%
SOUND	78%
PLAYABILITY	74%
VALUE	77%

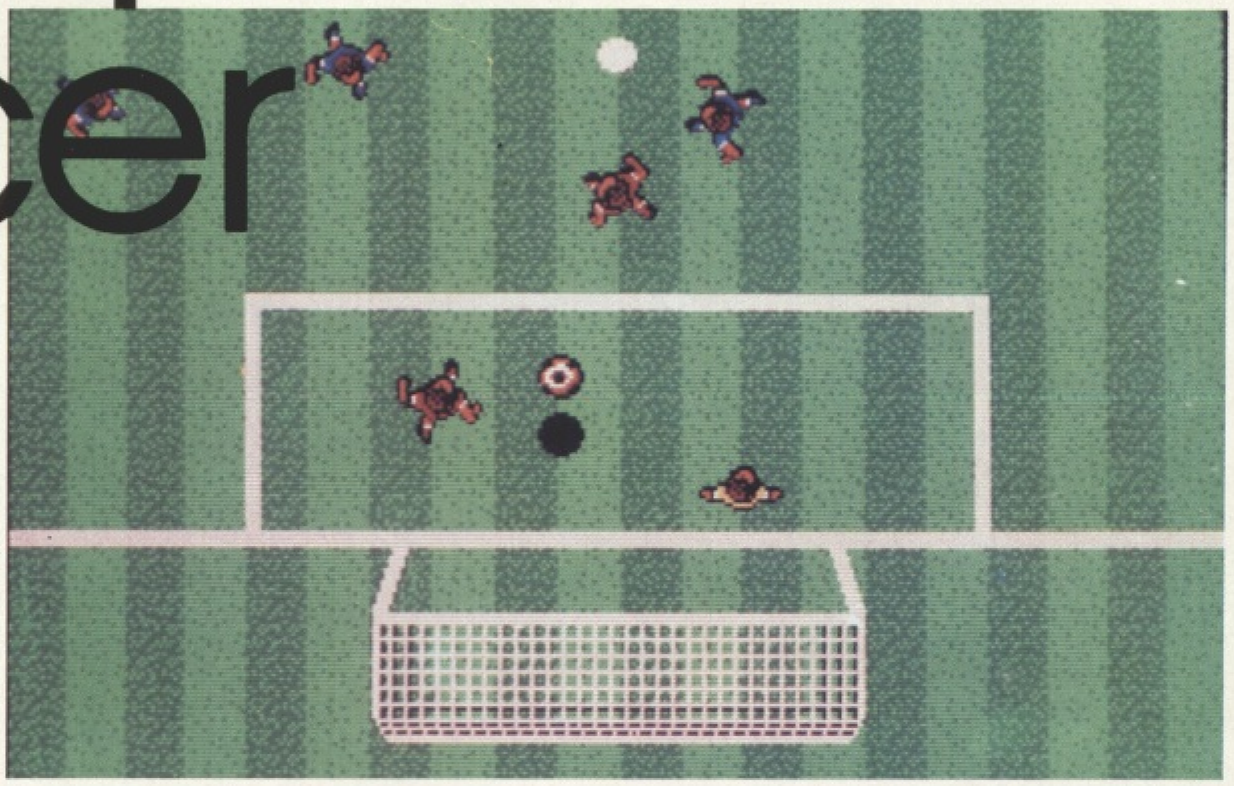
OVERALL 75%

A Due out round about now at a price of £19.99, there's little difference between this conversion and its coin-op parent. As such, the criticism of the ST version applies here.

PC A version is in the pipeline, but work has yet to begin and no firm details are available – other than the price of £19.99, EGA is likely to be supported, and a provisional release date has been set for later this year.

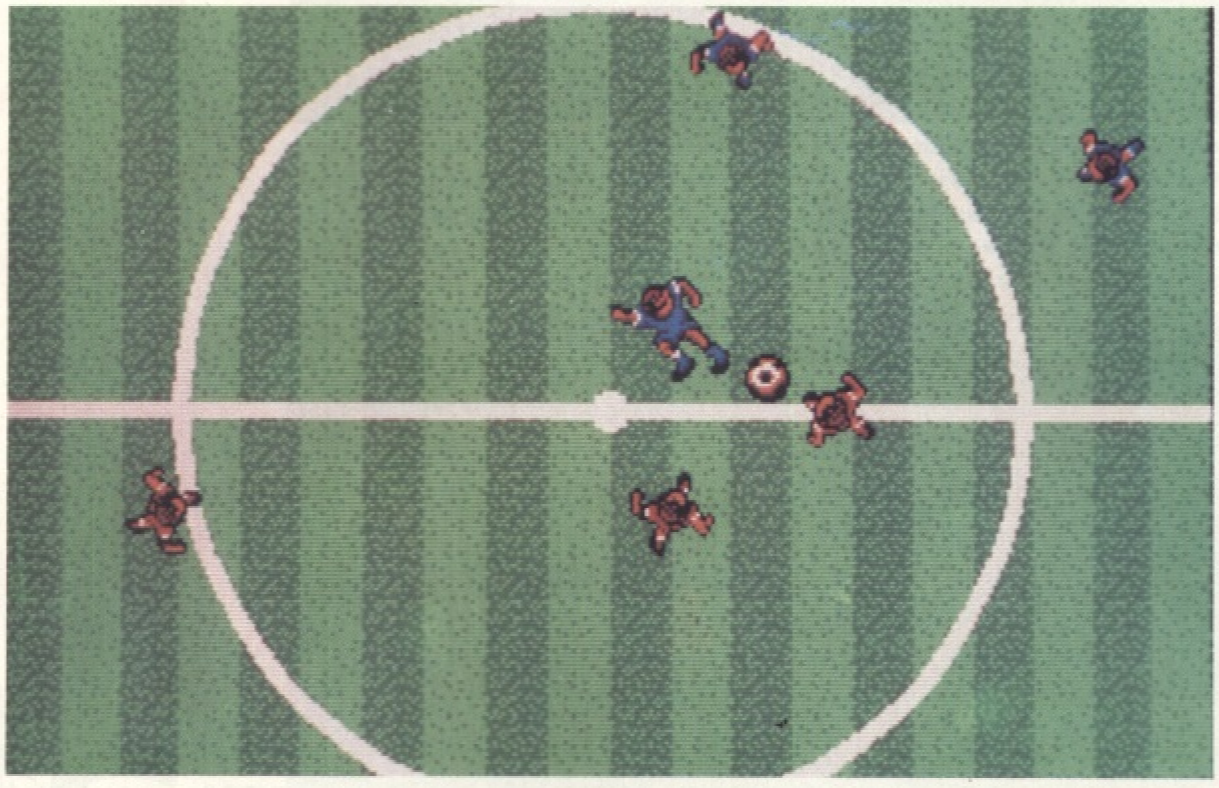
REVIEW BY MICROPROSE

Microprose Soccer



Microprose shocked everybody when they released Microprose Soccer for the C64. Not only had they produced a non-militaristic product, they had done it with such expertise that Microprose Soccer has become an instant classic on that format. Now, Microprose have released the sixteen-bit version. Just how do they compare with the original version? Read on . . .

The simulation provides both indoor and outdoor action with American rules six-a-side and standard eleven-a-side respectively. The time for each game can be varied between 2 and 12 minutes. Players may play against each other or one play against the computer. Selection of your team in the World Cup Competition is crucial, as it is in real life – it is much easier to win if you are a historically good footballing nation, such as Brazil than if you are Oman or Algeria. Conversely, if you get too good, you could try taking on the might of West Germany with yourself playing as Poland. Other control options allow for extremely varied games, with effects, such as, rain, thunder, overhead kicks and banana shots coming into play.



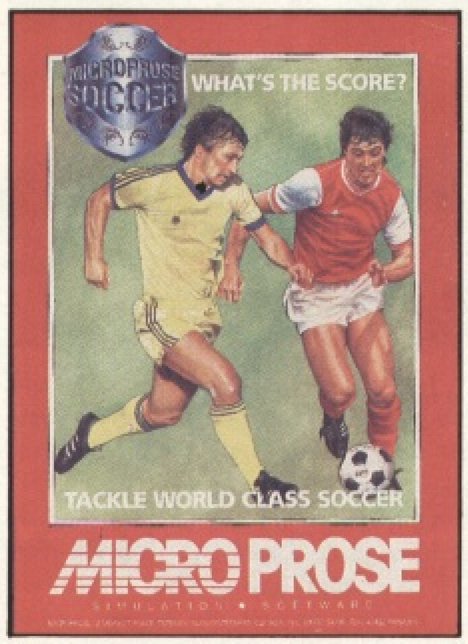
You are presented, on kick-off, with a look-down view – not a common one, but one that works well. On the 16-bit versions, you get no-holds barred, full screen, 8-way scrolling (so smooth!). Control your player nearest the ball with your joystick, using the firebutton to kick the ball in the direction your player is facing. The position of the joystick when kicking the ball determines the path that the ball takes, such as, high lobs, banana kicks and overhead kicks. Recapture possession of the ball with a sliding tackle (the wetter the pitch, the longer the slide!). Should the opposition get within shooting range, you gain control of your goalkeeper to prevent the inevitable shot from reaching the back of the net.

Throw-ins, corners and goal kicks all play their part in the game. Attention to detail is one of Microprose's hall marks and Microprose Soccer has not been left wanting in any respect. The colour of the players strips, strength of banana kicks and an action replay when a goal is scored are all excellent finishing touches to an already brilliant game. Overall, Microprose Soccer has to be the definitive football simulation – be there for the kick off!

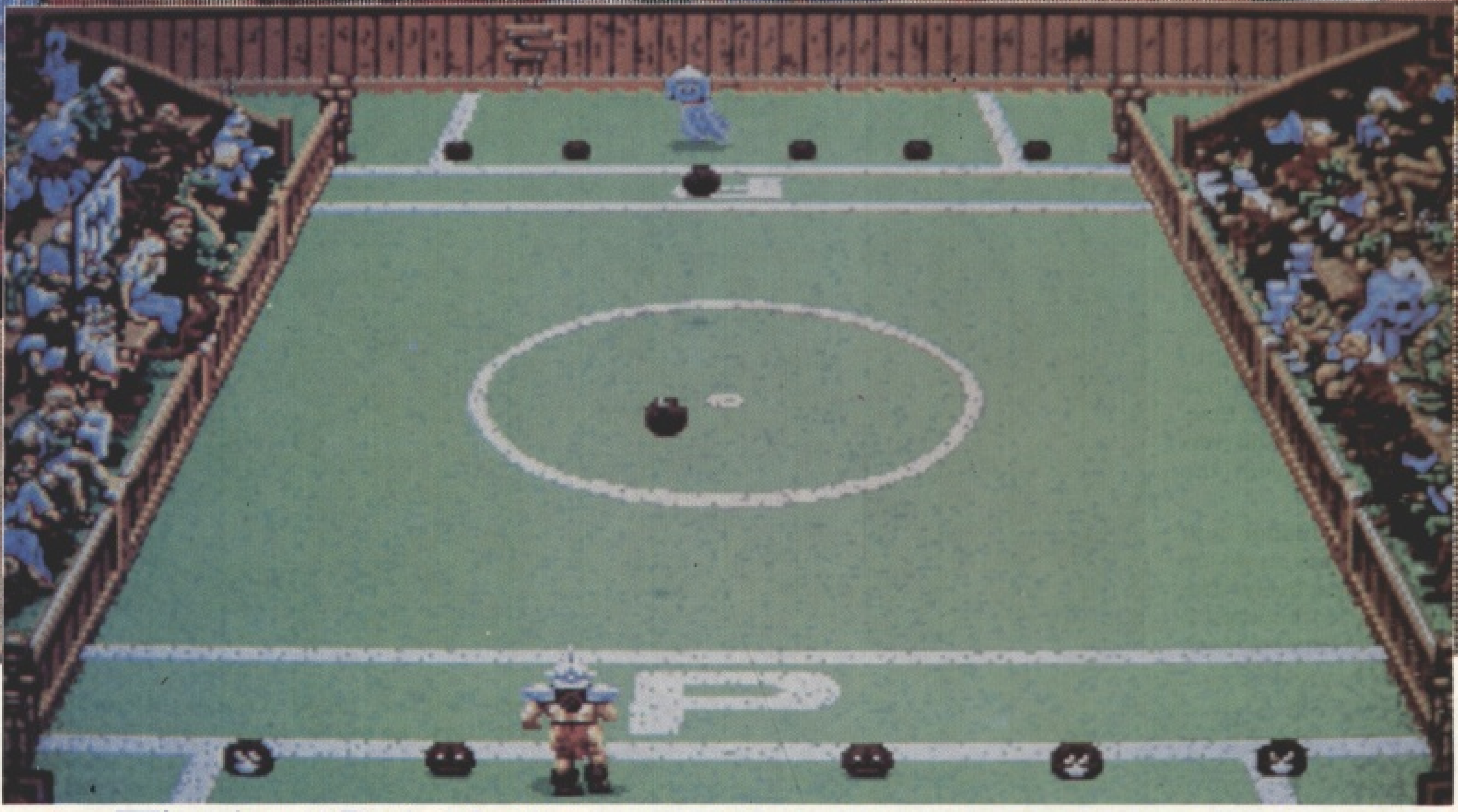
C & VG Game of the Month – 95%
'Undoubtedly the best football game ever produced – miss it at your peril!'
C & VG

Zzap Sizzler – 90%
'One of the best soccer sims I've ever seen. Little touches like the rain on the pitch and banana shots really make it something special.'
Zzap

TGM Star Player – 89%
'Microprose Soccer is of the highest quality – its fast action makes it far more playable than other soccer games.'
TGM

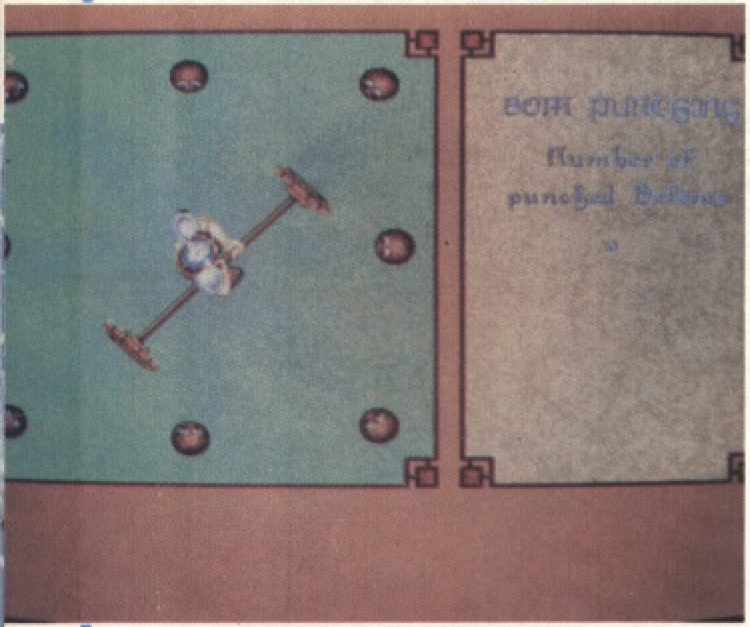






The main event. The players' positions never vary – that is, your player (the Dwarf) is always at the bottom of the screen with the opposition occupying the other end. The object is to kick your Beloms (the small furry creatures at your feet) to the opposition's side and then make a 'Home Run' across the pitch. Easy in theory, exasperatingly difficult in practice. The only way to win is to constantly hit your opponent, thus keeping him or her on the floor and unable to return the Beloms to your end. In the second division a low wall across the centre of the pitch makes things a little more interesting.

G
M



Win a round and you get to take part in the first of two impossibly difficult sub-games: The Revenge Of The Beloms (no prizes for guessing whose idea this bit is). Taking a 'shove-off pole' firmly in your grasp, the idea is to bash the many-legted Beloms as they dart about you intent on delivering a tickling attack. I'd rather try to drain a lake with a sieve. Reach the allotted total of bashed Beloms to increase your score – fail and the opposite occurs.

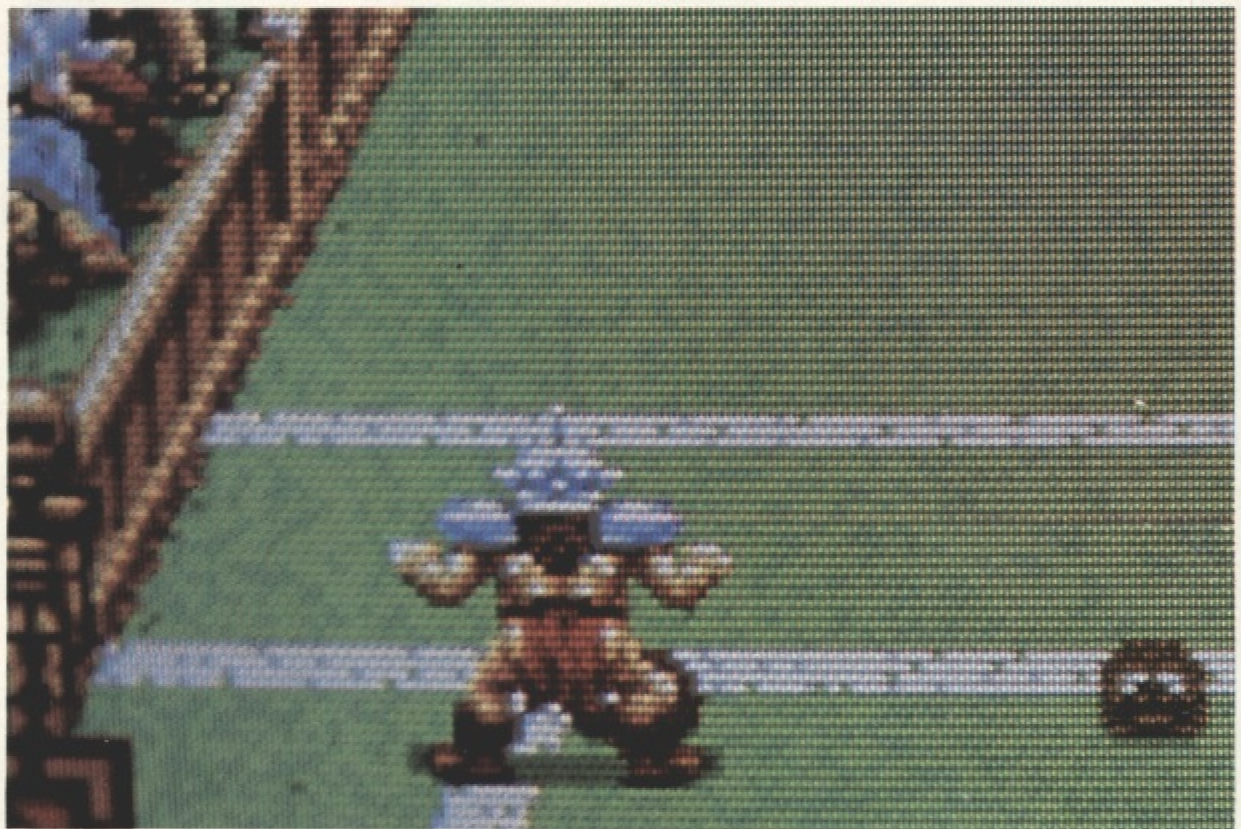


Pull down on the joystick and press fire to make a universal gesture in the general direction of the opposing fans (what the manual refers to as your 'vituperations'). While this has no bearing on the game, it does tend to make the crowd a little more boisterous.













rand onster Slam

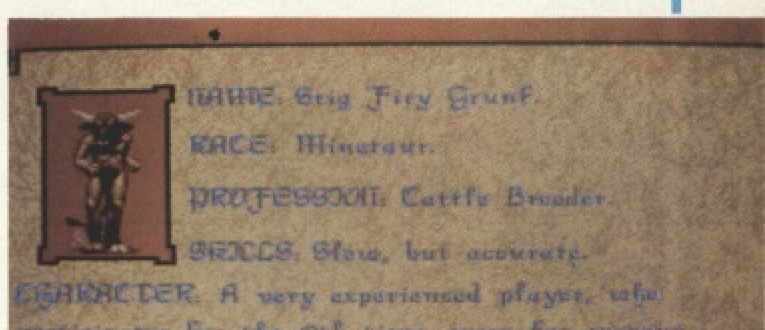
Tired of technofun, weary of the battle to save the Cosmos, Ciarán Brennan polishes up his Doc Martens to enter Golden Goblins inspired kickabout.

Since the reformation of the game rules in 11216, the Grand Slam Tournament has consisted of three leagues. The third division is an elimination contest between eight novices (and 'over the hill' veterans), the second is similar – with a different pitch and tougher opposition, while the premier league is a meeting between the winner of the first two and the three previous victors of the overall contest.

Players come from all over the galaxy to the planet GhoLD to compete in this, the most prestigious of all sports tournaments. There are Barbarians, Minotaurs, She-devils and you, a lowly Dwarf with nothing to offer but your dreams of fame and fortune.

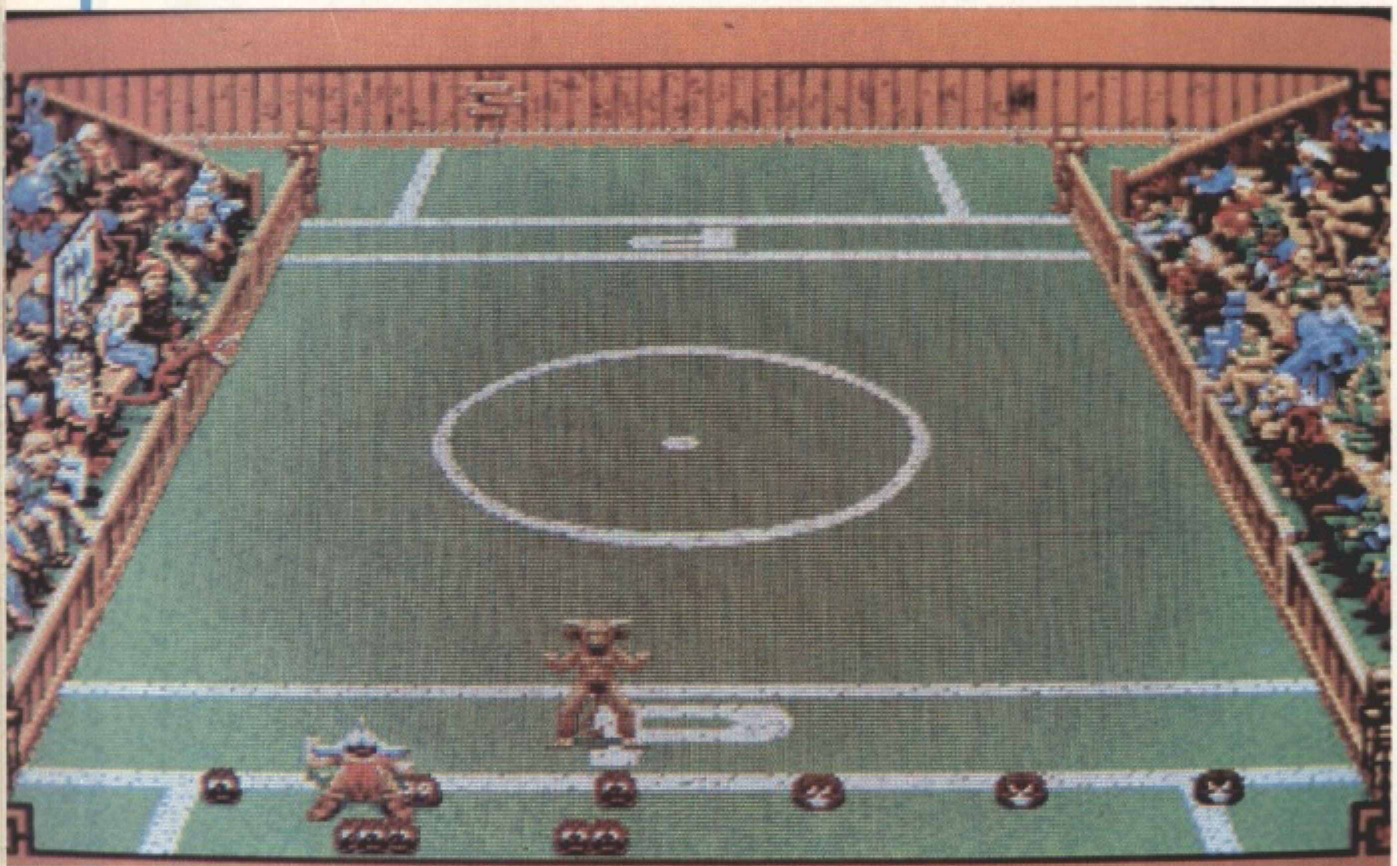
The Beloms are as ready as they'll ever be, the pitch has been cleared, the draw's been made and the crowd's getting pretty agitated. Let the tournament begin...

The individual opponent information screen is more than just a cosmetic frill. Valuable information can be gleaned from the 'Character' section – for example some players are very accurate, but tire easily, while others are plodders that can go on all day.

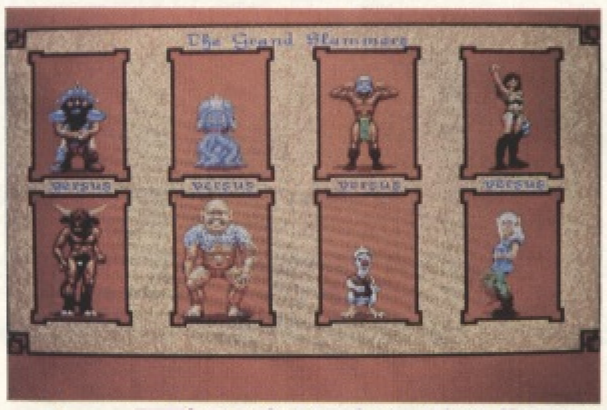


REVIEW

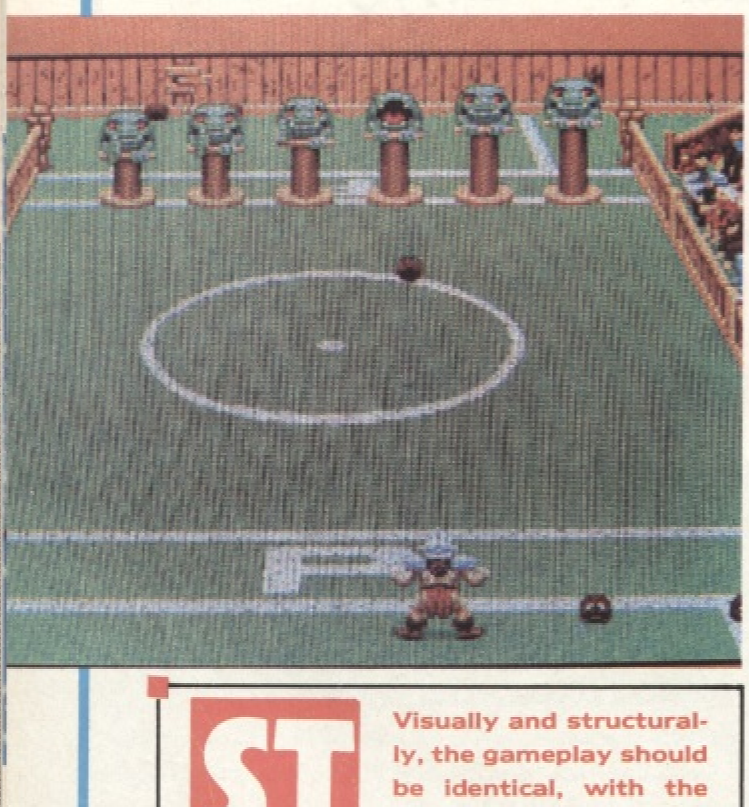




The second sub-game only occurs when the Dwarf has beaten all comers in the first round. The object is simply to kick an allotted number of Beloms into the mouths of the Remarkable Six Faultons (who double as a successful singing sextet). Success earns advancement to the next round – while unthinkable failure means that you stay at the level you've just completed.



The animated starting line-up shows all of the original eight contestants in the pairs that they are to compete in.



ST

Visually and structurally, the gameplay should be identical, with the distinct possibility of more intrusive disk changing. However, how the hypnotic musical score has fared at the hands of the ST's sound chip is yet to be heard. Price and release date as the Amiga.

PC

Also due out at the same time and price as the other 16-bit versions, this version suffers most in the translation. A great deal of the game's all-important atmosphere is generated by its spot-on spot effects, none of which made it to the IBM-compatibles. The graphics too are a let-down – blocky and suffering from the limited palette available.

PRICE	£19.99
RELEASE DATE	Out Now
GRAPHICS	70%
SOUND	57%
PLAYABILITY	68%
VALUE	64%

OVERALL 67%

A

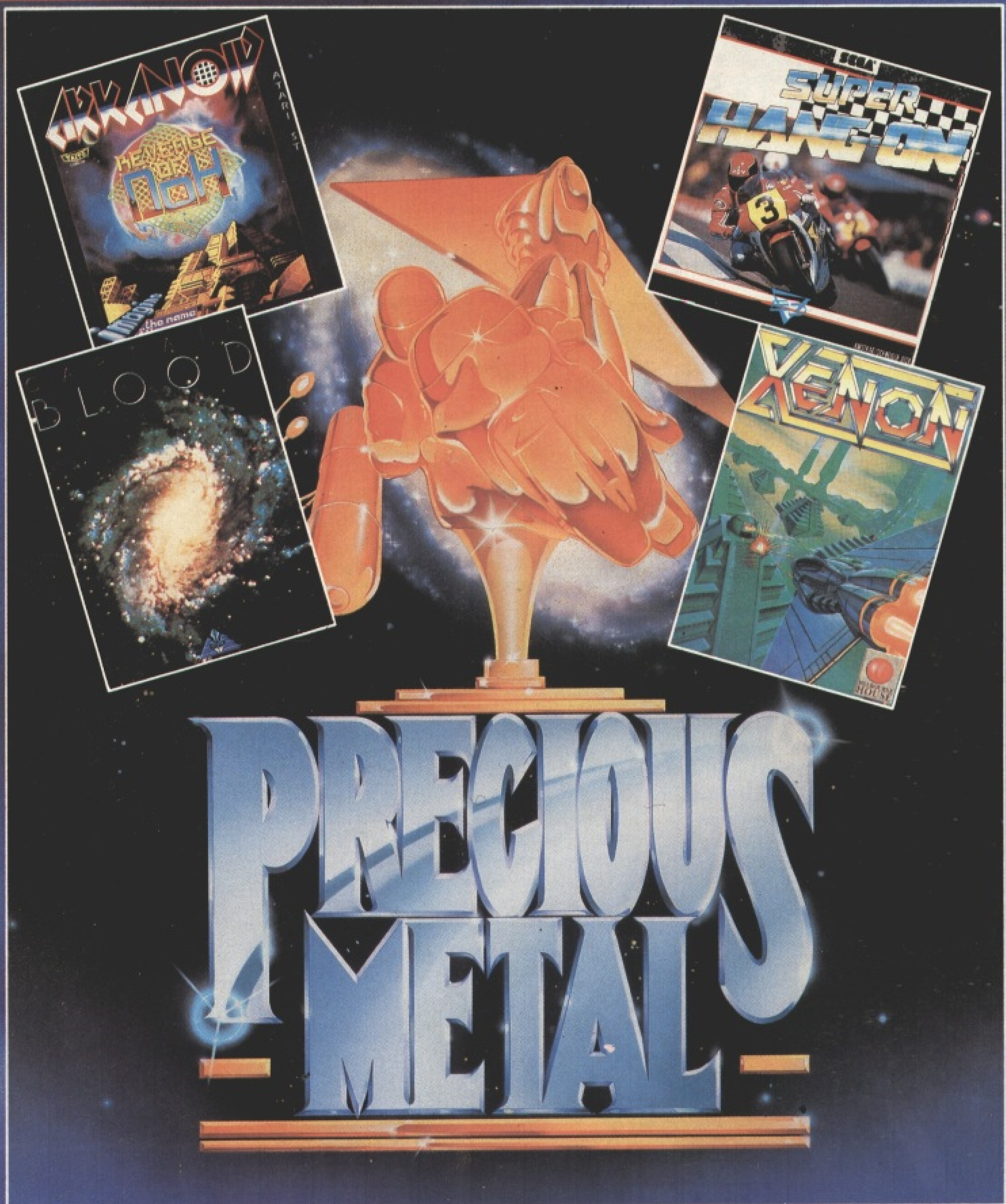
Some computer games develop skills that are useful in the real world – hand/eye co-ordination, reflexes, lateral thinking, logical construction – you know the kind of thing. All that Grand Monster Slam develops is the player's ability to cause distress to little furry creatures – oh, and a high degree of psychopathic impatience. But for all that it remains one of the most compulsive, original and downright entertaining games I've played in ages. On paper it has all the symptoms of being a real turkey: a fixed screen, limited joystick manipulation, unvarying gameplay and, worst of all, the ability for a basic game to last almost indefinitely with no apparent progress being made. And still I can't put it down. Part of the attraction is probably down to the elaborate scene setting and highly polished presentation – a real world is created, populated by genuinely individual characters. What's more, despite the care and attention that's obviously been lavished on it, the game never falls into the trap of taking itself too seriously. Take the manual as a prime example – where a simple instruction sheet would have easily been enough there's a well-illustrated and hilarious storybook (which is funny not only because of the usual translation howlers, but also because the writers meant it to be). The musical score too is a revelation. For once it seems as though a composer has been at work rather than a 'computer musician'. The main theme consists of layer upon layer of melody, counter melody and harmony (all in a suitable archaic style) – and all of this without sacrificing the spot effects – coo! There are a couple of bad points: there's a little disk swapping to be endured and the two sub-games are a touch too difficult to master (but the inclusion of practice modes goes some way towards making up for this) – irrelevant really in the great scheme of things. If you have a strong sense of the ridiculous, an appetite for the unusual and about three years of your life to spare then this one comes highly recommended.

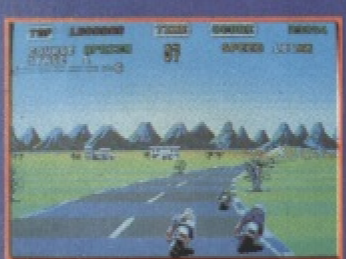
PRICE	£19.99
RELEASE DATE	Out Now
GRAPHICS	92%
SOUND	95%
PLAYABILITY	81%
VALUE	85%

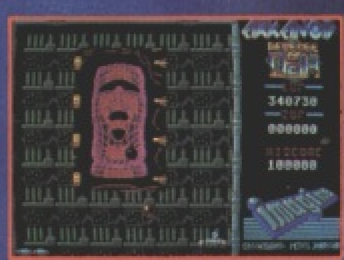
OVERALL 87%


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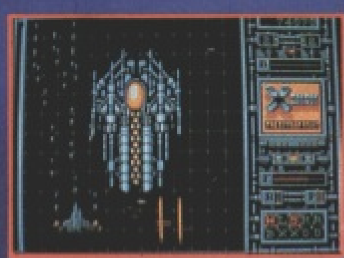
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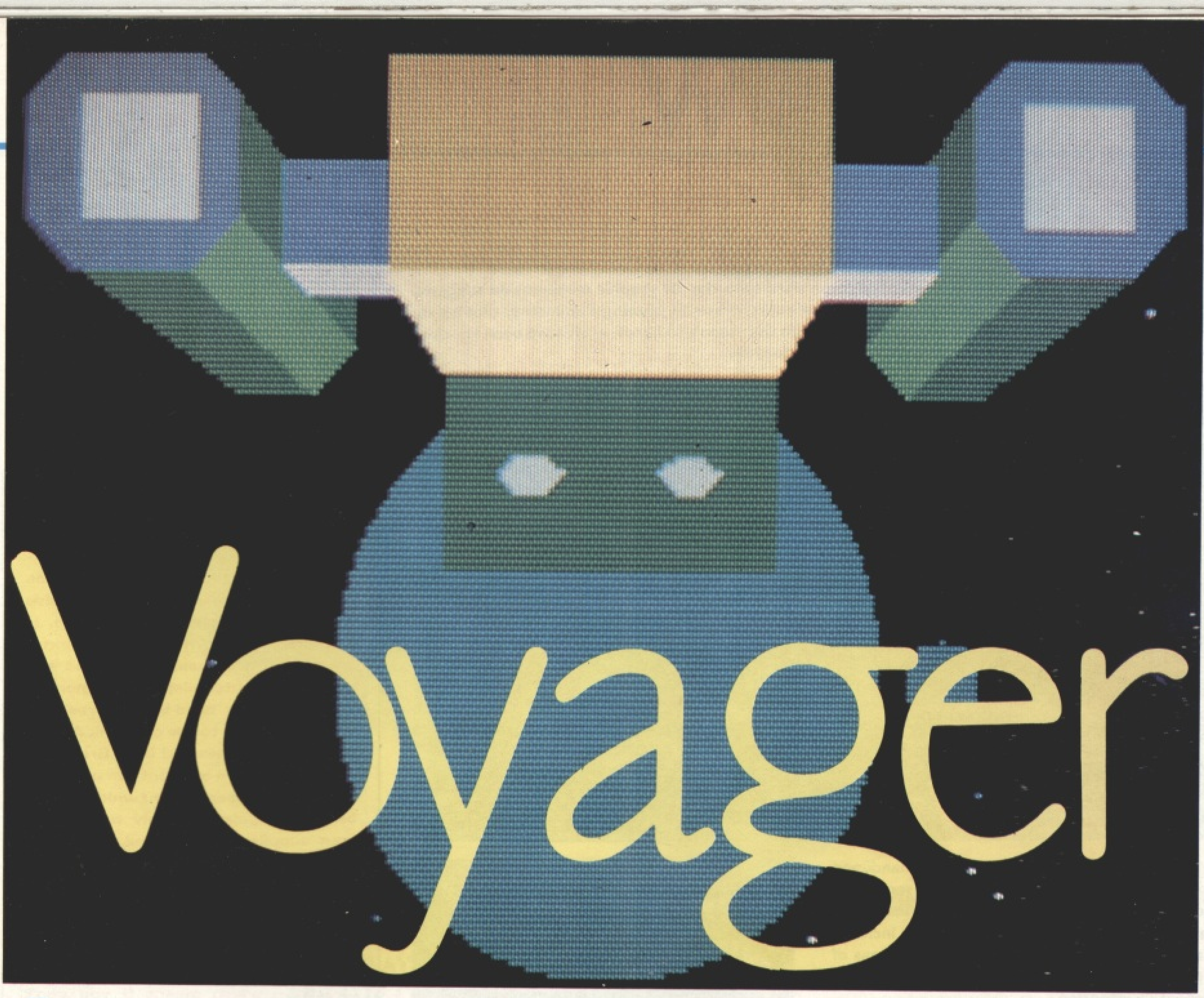
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Voyager

Just when you thought you'd seen everything that the shoot 'em up has to offer, Ocean adds another dimension. Gary Whitta takes up the challenge.

When NASA launched its Voyager II probe in 1977, complete with an invitation to alien life forms to visit Earth, it could have fallen into the hands of any of a billion different peaceful alien civilisations. But as luck would have it, it was picked up by the most sadistic warmongers of the lot, the Roxis.



Intent on galactic domination, but not quite powerful enough to overthrow their planetary neighbours, the Roxis decided instead to conquer the relatively primitive planet described by the wandering spacecraft.

After 100 years in transit, the belligerent fleet arrived in our solar system in 2139 – only to find a planet considerably more advanced than the one described by the probe, but still no match for the might of the fleet. In preparation for the attack, the fleet dispersed and holed up on the 10 moons of Saturn.

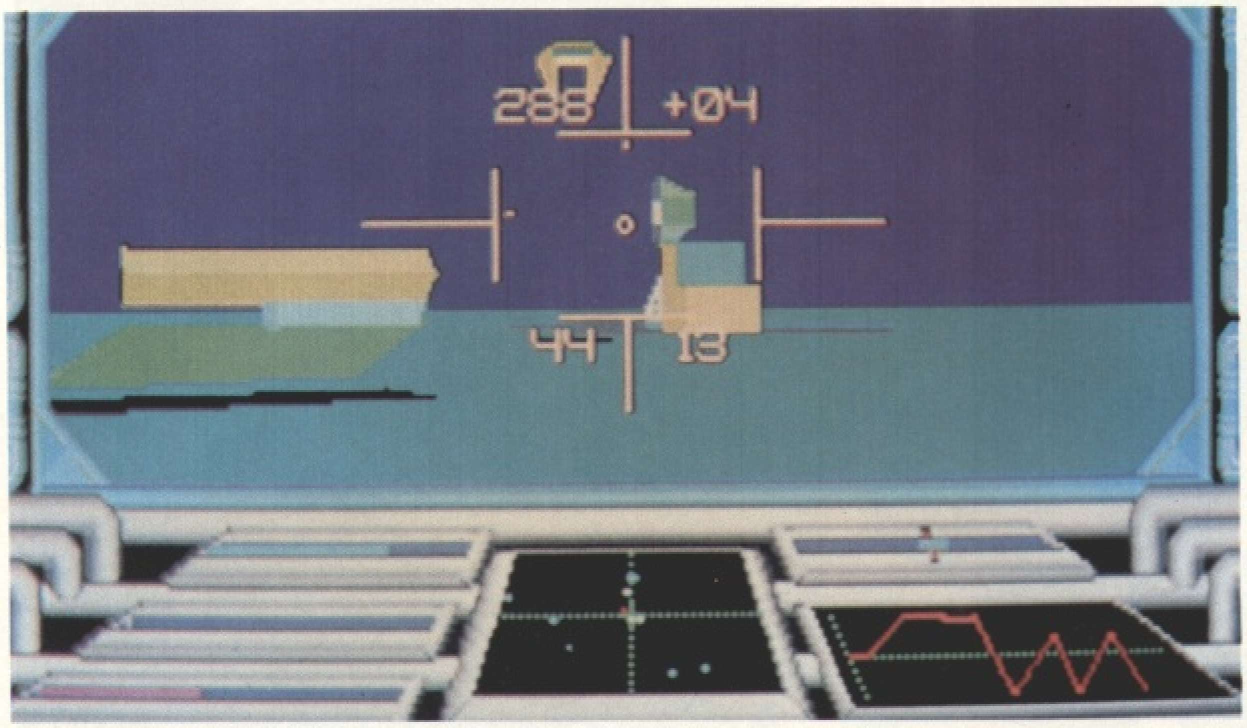
One by one, Earth's space-based installations were destroyed, confining human life to the planet. No ship, military or otherwise, launched from Earth could get to within a million miles of Saturn. It was just a matter of time before the Roxiz invaded . . .

But there was a hope. Galactic Freebooter Luke Snayles just happened to be returning to Earth after serving a 50-year sentence in his personal prison ship in deep space. Realising that something is wrong, have-a-go hero Luke decides to take on the Roxis forces while they're still on Saturn's moons.

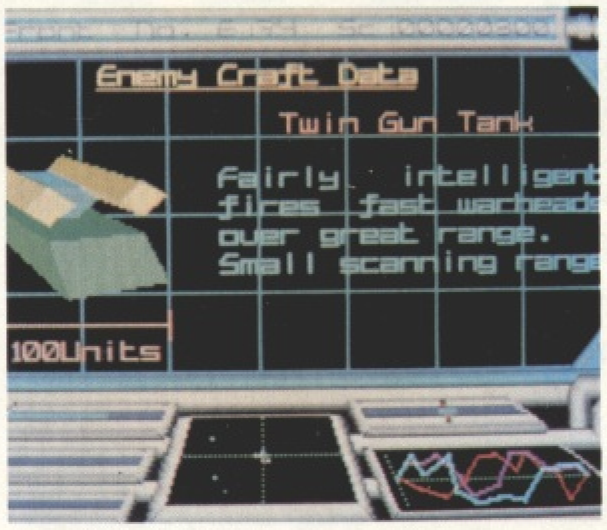


▲ Luke makes the drop from his prison ship to the first moon's surface in a small, manoeuvrable dropship. This initially performs only as a ground-based tank with limited speed, shields and firepower, however as the action progresses it can be upgraded to a faster, more powerful airborne skimmer.

Clearing a moon is more straightforward than the 3D graphic presentation suggests. There are no puzzles to solve – just concentrate on blasting the enemy, topping up fuel supplies and upgrading your ship's systems. When the moon's 80 hostile craft have been knocked out, a warp tunnel to the next appears at a hidden location.



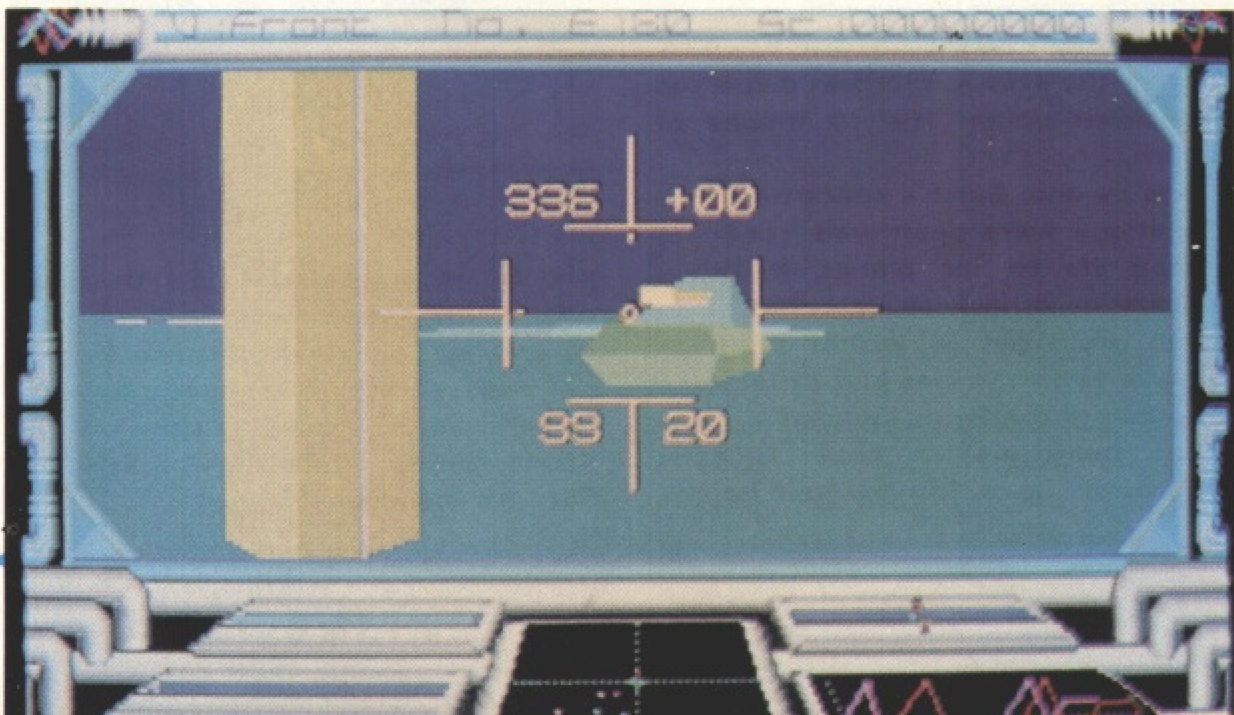
The dropship can use abandoned Roxis weaponry and secondary defence systems to supplement the laser cannon. The rudimentary equipment includes armed mini-cameras (to view distant areas of the moon), while decoys are used to divert the enemy's attention.





The mothership beams down information on request, including plans of the alien ships, a long-range map of the current moon, mothership status information and remote camera location.

Janus, the first of Saturn's moons, is the least heavily defended. Its defences are mainly tank-based, so the action is vaguely remniscent of Atari's classic wire-frame tank-based shoot 'em up Battlezone (although the 'intelligent' opposition makes it considerably more difficult).





ST First impressions are often misleading – as in this case, where what appears to be a Starglider II variant turns out instead to be a visually impressive and highly playable shoot 'em up. In skimmer mode, with hordes of extra enemies, extra weapons to find and collect, computer displays to monitor and the classy filled-vector presentation, Voyager is to the old Tank Attack games what Arkanoid is to Breakout. The combination of shoot 'em up action and frequent searching (which has to be done regularly if only to re-stock your supplies) works well, creating a compulsion to find the next weapon – if only to see the effect on the enemy. If there is a problem, it's that the action can be a little sporadic at times. The enemy attacks in waves, with the next not appearing until the current one is cleared – which means if you don't have the firepower to wipe out a certain wave, you can't move on to another and return to it later. Despite this, Voyager is polished in every respect – from the humorous storyline to the end of the blasting.

PRICE	£19.95
RELEASE DATE	Out Now
GRAPHICS	82%
SOUND	77%
PLAYABILITY	81%
VALUE	80%

OVERALL 81%

A Ocean is anticipating a release around now at a price of £24.95. The smooth, fast graphics are complemented by some meaty sampled sounds and aliens which don't appear in the ST incarnation. How's that for service?

PC No firm details as yet as the decision has only just been made to produce an MS-DOS compatible version. However, programming is expected to begin as you read this, and a release date has been pencilled in for later this year.

Robo







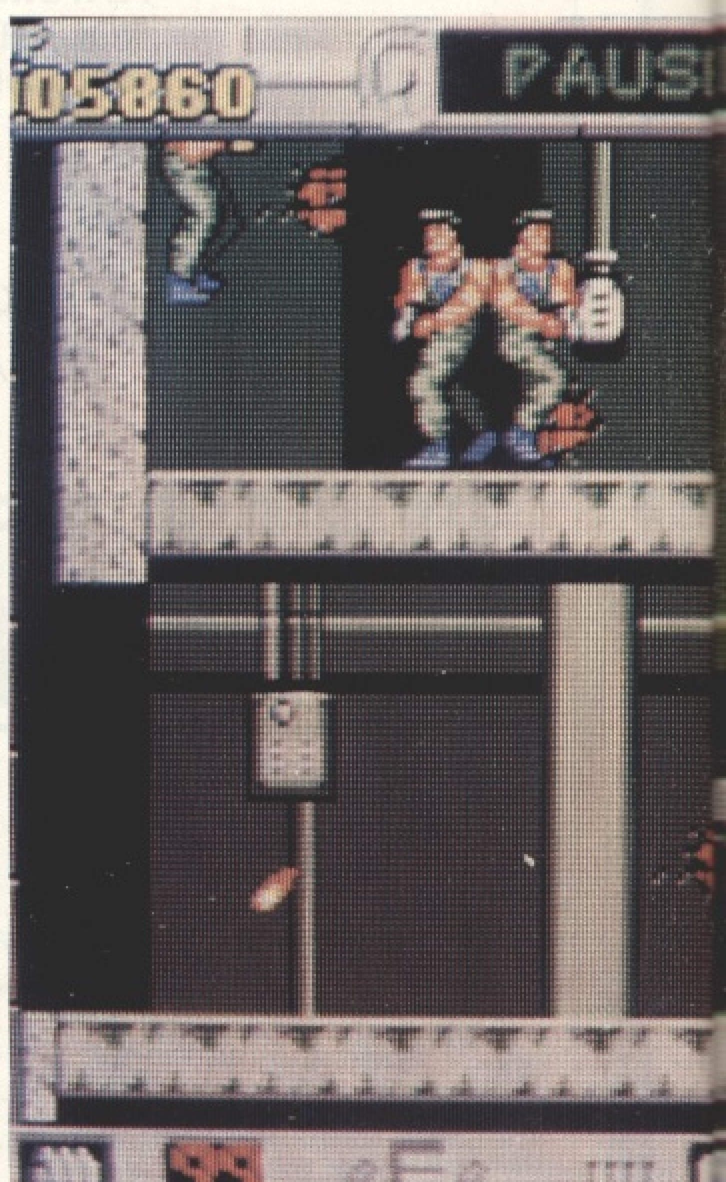
If you want to know the time, ask a policeman – just make sure he's not seven feet tall and covered in Titanium. Brian Nesbitt brushes up on his four prime directives before investigating Ocean's game of the coin-op of the film.

Released at the beginning of 1988, Paul Verhoeven's combination of tongue-in-cheek humour, special effects and gratuitous bloodshed was the biggest box-office hit of the year and also the perfect candidate for computer game conversion.

Ocean, who stepped in with the necessary dosh as soon as the licensing rights were offered, was quick to act on its scoop and immediately farmed out the coin-op rights to Data East. But when it came to the home versions, rather than convert the coin-op outright, Ocean decided to take its best elements and add a few ideas of its own.

The first level pits RoboCop against a bunch of street punks. Initially a solid Robo-punch is enough to see them off – but later the metallic hero is forced to use his pistol. The end of the level brings on Robo's arch-rival, ED-209.





Robocop tops up his energy and boosts his firepower by punching his way into packing crates and collecting the contents. Upgrades include three-way bullets, a Zapgun and, most devastating of all, the Manta gun – a high-powered shell-firing rifle.



Set in the all-too-near future, RoboCop is a story of justice and revenge. After a streetwise Detroit cop, Murphy, is savagely 'murdered' by a band of gun-toting villains, his shattered body is used as a base for a prototype cybernetic crimefighting machine – in short, a bionic cop.

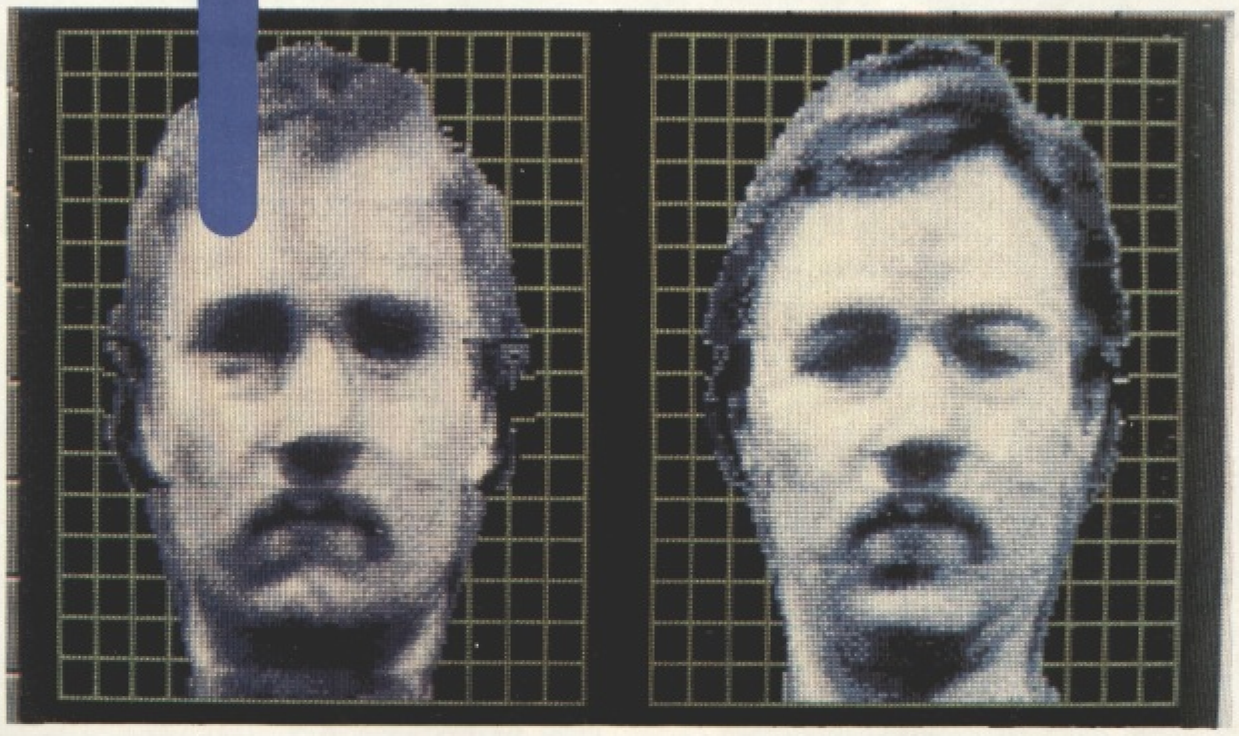
With gears and levers replacing muscles and tendons, Murphy goes back on the beat to clean up the city – and to revenge himself on the outlaws that gunned him down.

Cop

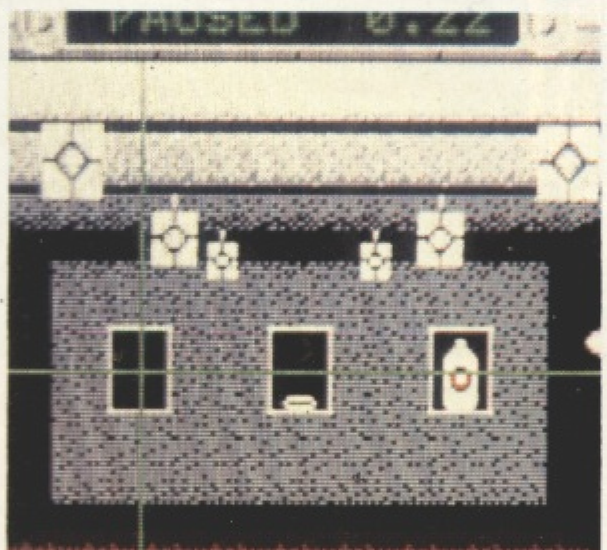




The movie's plot is closely adhered to from beginning to end. After a shoot-out with a felon jog's RoboCop's memory, he uses the police computer to make a full identification. The criminal's digitised image is displayed, and the metal copper has 30 seconds to come up with an identical visage from a bank of eyes, ears, hairstyles, noses and chins – in effect a computerised 'photofit' facility. Five thousand bonus points is the difference between success and failure.

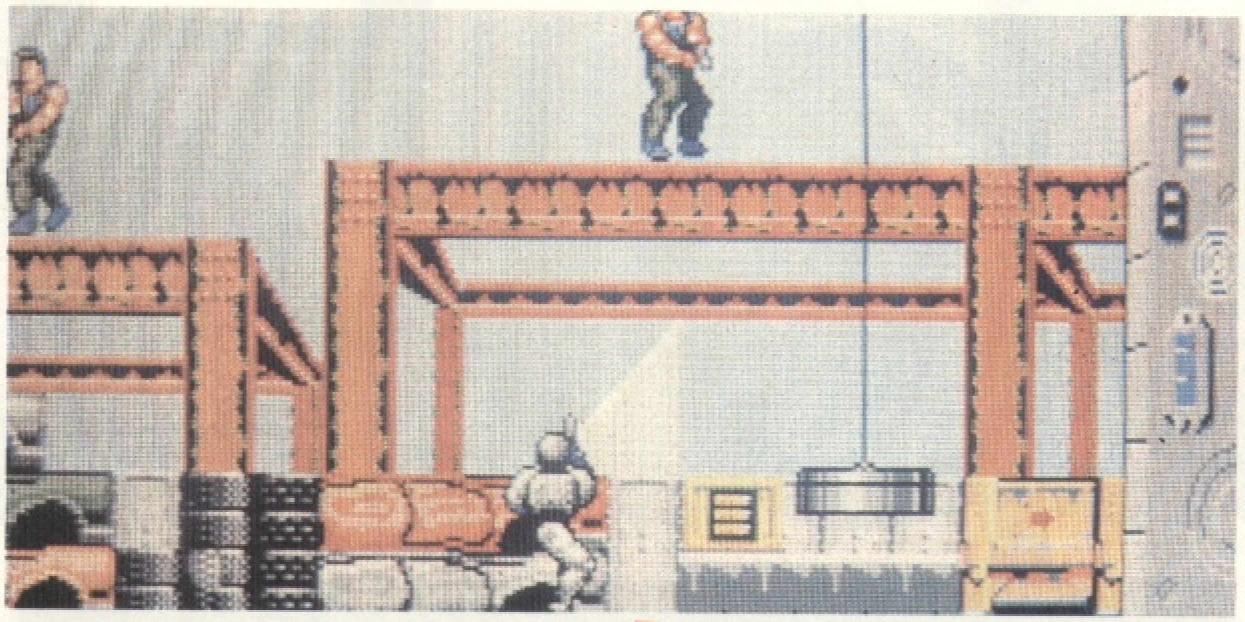




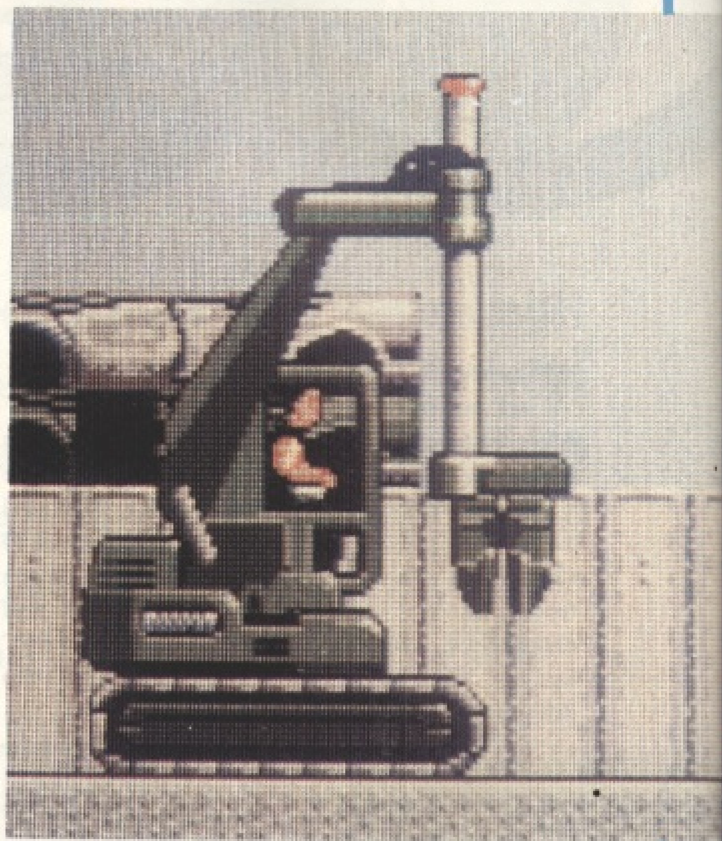


Another break from plugging criminals is provided in the station's shooting gallery where RoboCop practises his marksmanship. This time there's a real incentive to do well – honing your shooting skills here is useful practice for later on where you'll have to hit live targets in hostage situations.





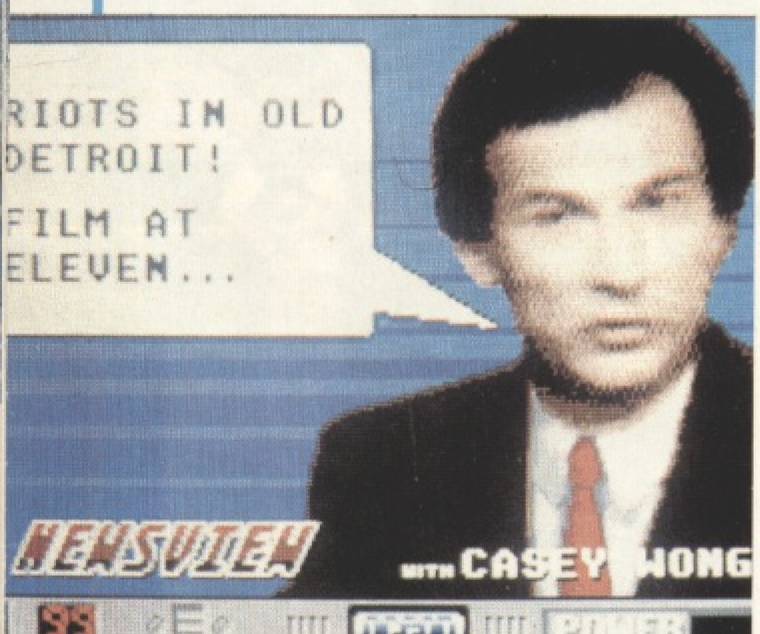
◀ After picking up a lead on where to find Clarence Boddiker, the leader of the gang that 'killed' Murphy, RoboCop confronts the bad guys at the local junkyard. When he's not dealing with chainsaw-wielding maniacs, our hero has to avoid car-crushing machinery and flying fenders as he moves towards a final confrontation with the evil gang boss.



▲ With Clarence 'arrested', there's one last problem to deal with before the junkyard is felon-free. Clarence's right-hand man comes steaming in on a JCB, hoping to turn RoboCop into a scrap-iron cube.

PETER JOHNSON

The technician responsible for bringing the metal hero to your screens is a 25-year-old budding pop star from just outside Newcastle. When he's not wrestling with 68000 machine code, Peter Johnson plays guitar and keyboards with a beat combo called Startled By The Sun (although they may change their name to Success Without Eric in honour of their recently departed bass player). Peter was given the task of bringing the mechanical cop to life, when having seen the film he badgered Ocean's Gary Bracey to give him a chance. Prior to this project, Peter programmed for the BBC for five years and was also part responsible for four of Ocean's previous 16-bit efforts: **Arkanoid, Arkanoid: Revenge Of Doh, Wizball** and **Daley Thompson's Olympic Challenge.** As for the future? Nothing's certain, but if Mr Johnson has his way there'll be a few more arcade conversions emanating from his Tyneside base.



ST Data East, responsible for many horizontally-scrolling beat 'em ups in the past (Dragon Ninja, Kung-Fu Master) did an excellent job on the coin-op – the action was tense, bloody and most importantly, it felt just like a RoboCop game should. Ocean's interpretation isn't quite so atmospheric, but much of the original's flavour has been retained and the photofit and hostage sequences are welcome extras. The end result means that the mindless shoot 'em up action is given some kind of progressive meaning – in this case RoboCop's vendetta with Clarence Boddiker and the corrupt industrialist that employs him. The reason this conversion lacks some of the coin-op's atmosphere is mainly due to its look and sound. The criminals look hard enough, but RoboCop doesn't so much pound the beat as mince along it, and the tinkly rendition of the movie's theme tune doesn't suit the action at all. In the arcades Robo warns the villains to 'Drop it!' when they produce a gun and turns to the player and exclaims 'Thank you for your co-operation' at the end of the level. Some such digitised quotations would have been welcomed here. But all things taken in to account, RoboCop's good points outweigh its bad ones and it's a more than competent cross-conversion of both the movie and coin-op.

PRICE	£19.95
RELEASE DATE	Out Now
GRAPHICS	73%
SOUND	66%
PLAYABILITY	83%
VALUE	79%

OVERALL 80%

A Programmer Peter Johnson is hoping to include some sampled sound from the coin-op as well as some speech of his own in what should prove to be more than a simple port-over from the Atari. 'Hey, Copper!' the villains will yell as they appear, and the rust-free rozzer is expected to reply with a selection of monotone warnings before he opens fire. As an added bonus there'll also be a few neat touches taken from the movie – including RoboCop drawing his gun from the mechanical holster built into his leg. On the down side, this version will cost a fiver more than the ST model.

PC Programmed by newcomer Astros, a CGA version is in the shops now at £24.95. An EGA version that promises to be identical to the ST is in the pipeline, to be released later in the year.

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Screen shots from Atari ST and Amiga versions.



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DEMOS

Demos? Yes, demos. Demonstrations of what a programmer or machine is capable of. Demonstrations of talent – musical, visual or technical. A means of expression or promotion. An entertaining alternative... Each month we feature a selection of demos available – preferably on the Public Domain circuit. We also want to see your pictures and animations and hear YOUR sounds. Send anything vaguely interesting to: DEMOS, The One, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, LONDON EC1R 3AU. **Please note: we can't guarantee to return your disks unless you provide a suitable stamped self-addressed envelope.**





Music lovers everywhere probably won't be delighted by the appearance of four Amiga disks packed with digitised pictures of Kylie Minogue accompanied by samples of her biggest hits, including **I Should Be So Rubbish**, **Got To Be Rubbish**, **The Loco-Rubbish**, and **Je Ne Sais Pas, Poor Rubbish**? Great if you think Kylie's tops. Grates if you don't.

More discerning Amiga pop pickers will probably appreciate a Max Headroom-less but nonetheless competent adaptation of The Art Of Noise's **Paranoimia**, a mediocre rendition of Michael Jackson's **Smooth Criminal**, and an alkaline acid anthem.

Slightly less acidic is an Amiga version of the neverending ST remix of MARRS' **Pump Up The Volume** as featured in Issue Two. This clever arrangement merrily throbs away of its own accord until you select one of three speeds or trigger one of 10 **Replay**-sampled sounds, including select snippets from the record, a "Buggerallmoney!" from **Harry Enfield**, "This tape will self destruct in five seconds" from the television programme **Mission Impossible**, and "Human Beings Nearby" from the science fiction film **Forbidden Planet.**

Like Nancy Sinatra's boots, these ray-traced legs were made for walking. In fact that's all they do in this ageing Amiga demo.

But demos aren't soley about cleverly programmed sequences, oh no. What better way for software publishers to promote their wares than specially produced playable 'previews'.

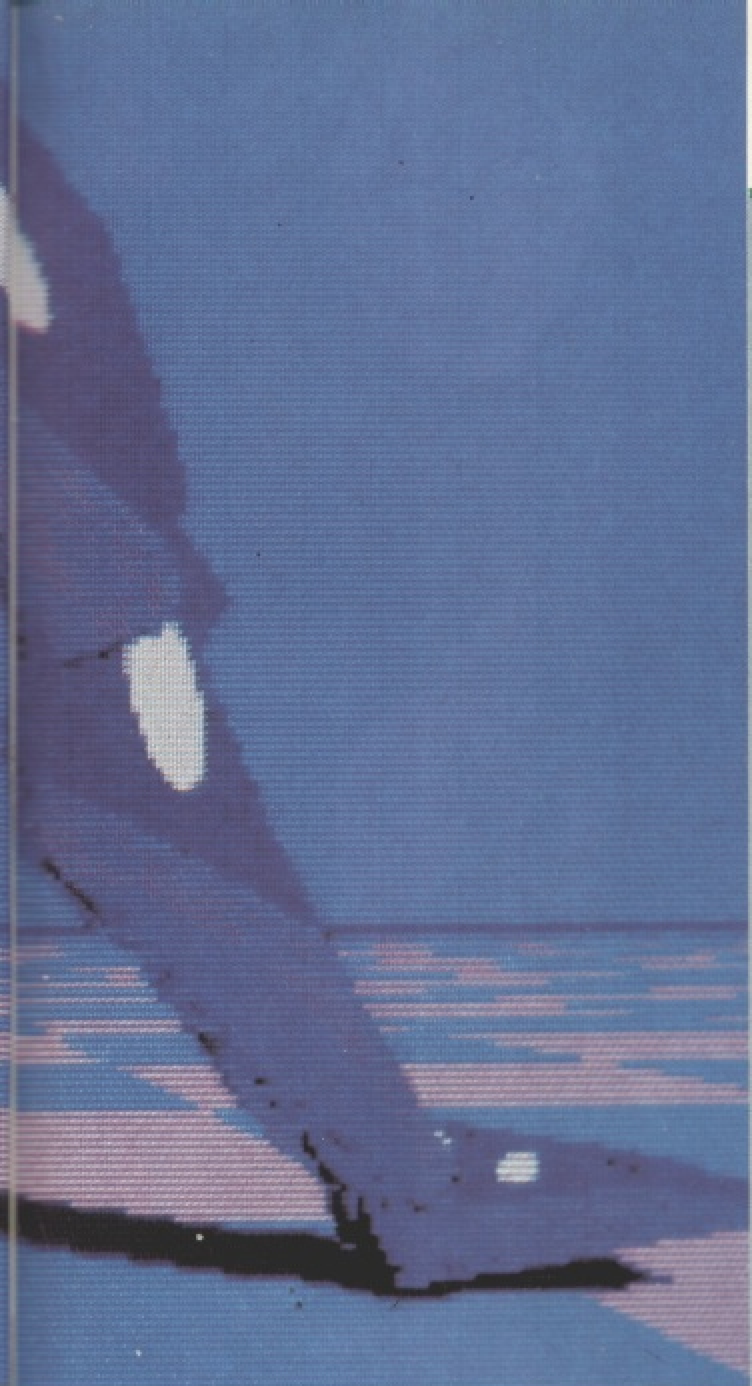
An early version of the first level of Ocean's soon-to-be-released tie-in **RoboCop** and the first level of Domark's considerably older coin-op conversion of Atari's **Star Wars** both provide ample amusement for ST owners. A playable section of Microdeal's **Leatherneck** is sure to please, as are some choice stills from Cinemaware's **Defender Of The Crown**.

Considerably less entertaining though, is a couple of seconds of action digitised from the Atari laser disc coin-op **Space Age**. It's on the ST, it's monochrome, and it'szzzzzz...

And finally: utilities. There are plenty of them available on the Public Domain, including simplistic art and sound packages, virus killers, and... and a demo of **Autoroute**, a route finder cum roadmap program for the ST. This cut-down version provides the route of your dreams for a small section of the country, whereas the complete product, available for around £150, supports the whole of the UK.



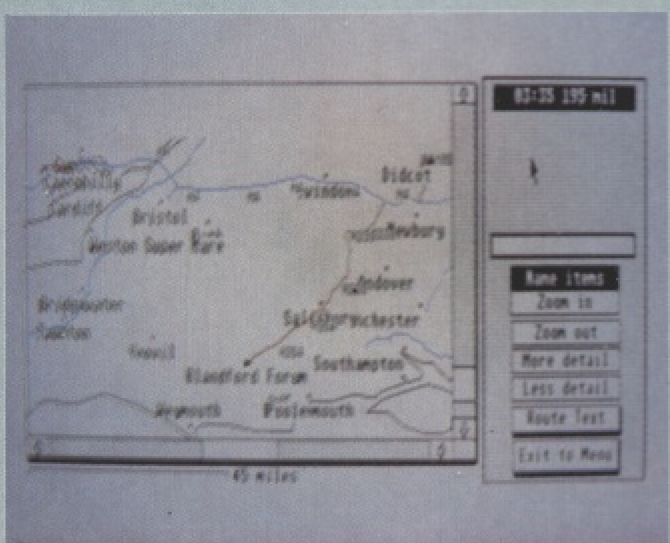
Monochromatic and far more melodramatic... a short burst of Space Ace on the ST.



Nice legs, shame about the ray trace.

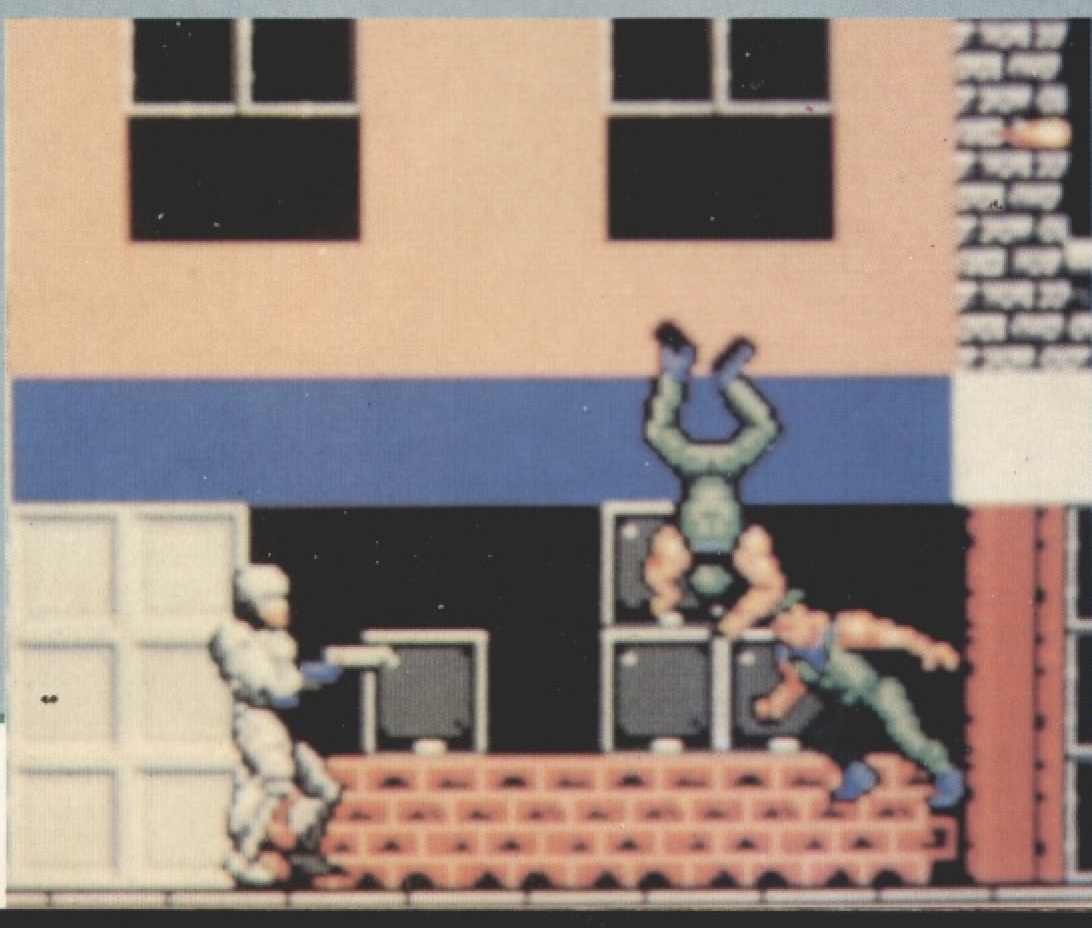
Kylie: Digitised, sampled and still Krubbish.





Let's go from here to... ooh, there. I'd like to stop off somewhere else, I don't mind A roads, but I hate motorways. I drive a 2CV, and I want to know the most economic route. All this and more is considered in Autoroute.

There's a new guy in town. His name's RoboCop.



WHERE YOU CAN GET THEM...

The Humberside Public Domain Library, 2 Old Mill Close, Market Weighton, York YO4 3DU. Tel: (0430) 872395.

Plenty of animations, pictures, games and utilities on offer. The latest selection includes...

GAM22: Star Wars demo
GAM23: RoboCop demo
GAM24: Leatherneck demo
GRA22: Defender Of The Crown stills.

17 Bit Software, PO Box 97, Wakefield, Yorkshire WF1 1XX. Tel: (0924) 366982.

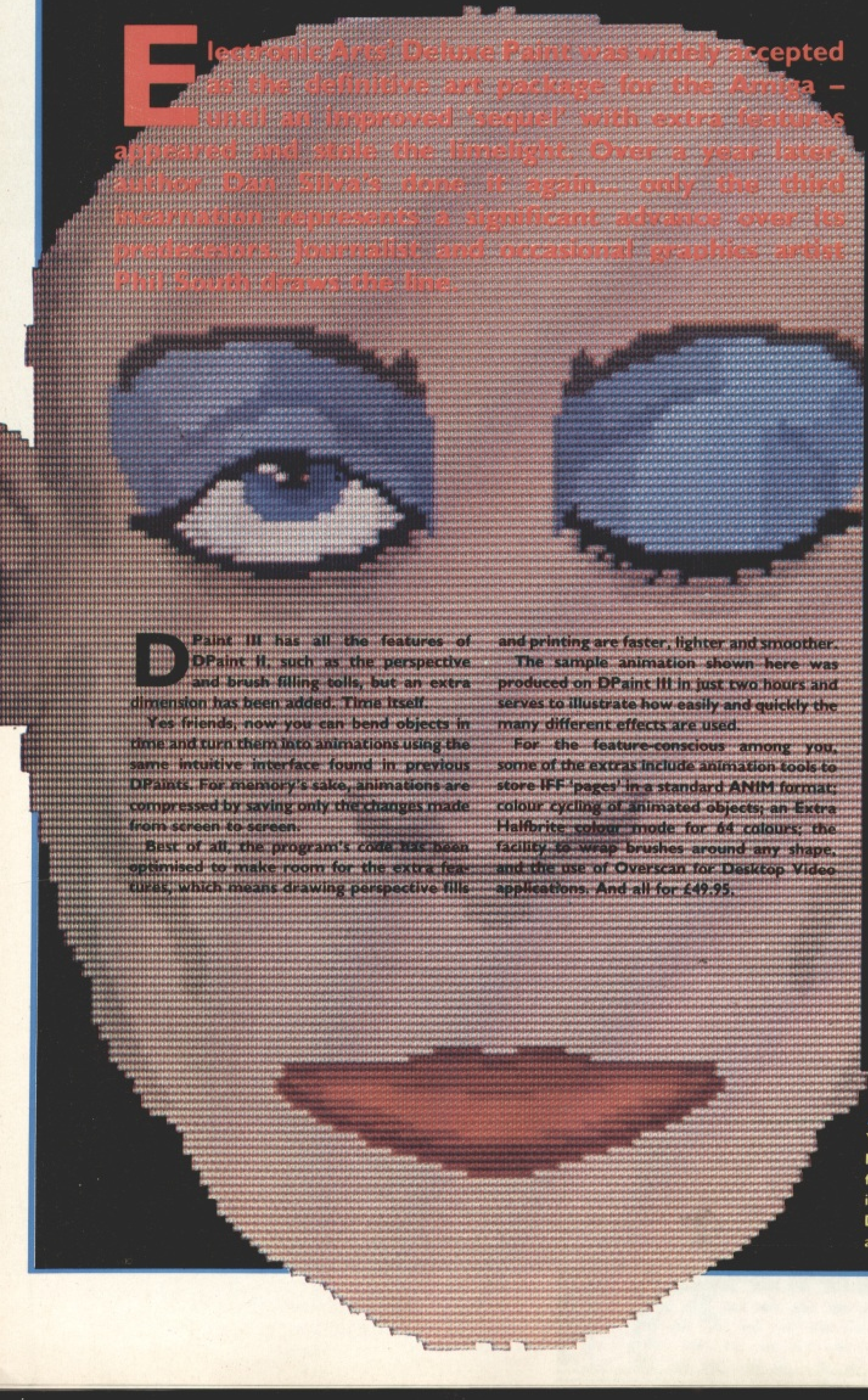
More than too many demos available here, including...

AMIGA DISK 270, 285, 286, 187: Kylie!
AMIGA DISK 274: Paranoimia/Smooth Criminal
AMIGA DISK 289: Pump Up The Volume
AMIGA DISK 263: Legs
ST DISK 152: Pump Up The Volume
ST DISK 174: Space Ace
ST DISK 184: Autoroute demo.

For further details of Autoroute, **contact: NextBase Ltd, Unit 18, Central Trading Estate, Staines, Middlesex TW18 4XE. Tel: (0784) 60077.**

DELUXE PAINT III

Electronic Arts' Deluxe Paint was widely accepted as the definitive art package for the Amiga – until an improved 'sequel' with extra features appeared and stole the limelight. Over a year later, author Dan Silva's done it again... only the third incarnation represents a significant advance over its predecesors. Journalist and occasional graphics artist Phil South draws the line.



DPaint III has all the features of DPaint II, such as the perspective and brush filling tolls, but an extra dimension has been added. Time itself.

Yes friends, now you can bend objects in time and turn them into animations using the same intuitive interface found in previous DPaints. For memory's sake, animations are compressed by saving only the changes made from screen to screen.

Best of all, the program's code has been optimised to make room for the extra features, which means drawing perspective fills and printing are faster, lighter and smoother.

The sample animation shown here was produced on DPaint III in just two hours and serves to illustrate how easily and quickly the many different effects are used.

For the feature-conscious among you, some of the extras include animation tools to store IFF 'pages' in a standard ANIM format; colour cycling of animated objects; an Extra Halfbrite colour mode for 64 colours; the facility to wrap brushes around any shape, and the use of Overscan for Desktop Video applications. And all for £49.95.



▲ The words were turned into brushes and moved through the Y axis in two different directions using the MOVE menu. The face was copied to all 24 frames and each eye and teardrop redrawn as individual cells. So even if you're no Walt Disney, you stand a chance of being an Amiga animator.

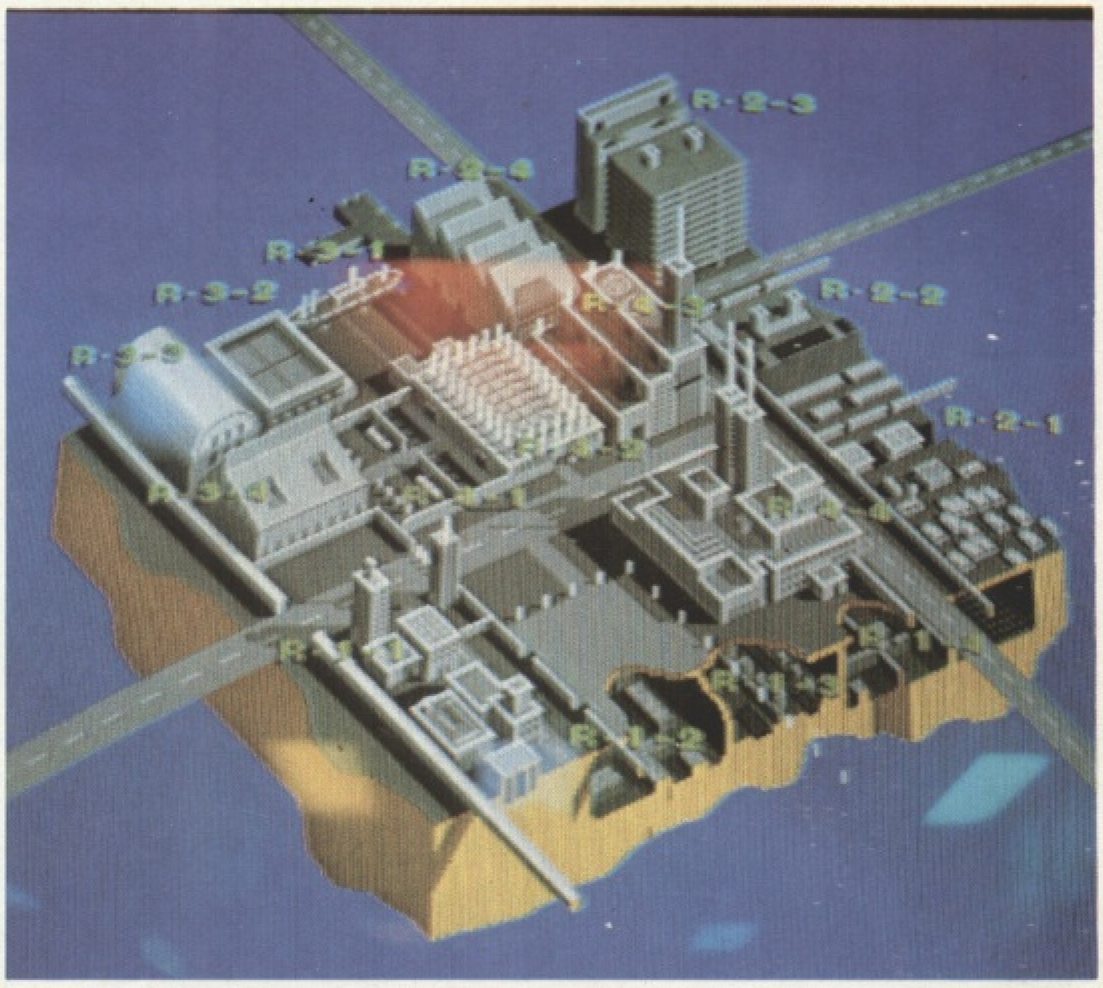


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SPECTRUM 48/128K – c&d
AMSTRAD – c & d
ATARI ST. AMIGA.
IBM P.C.
HE'S THE MEANEST SON OF A SNAKE YOU'VE EVER SEEN!
Screen shots from Atari ST
HE'S THE ...
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CARVE OUT A PATH OF SAVAGE DESTRUCTION AS YOU BATTLE TO STAMP YOUR SUPREMACY OVER A MULTITUDE OF OPPONENTS.
Face Igor the Fearless and his rabid dog amongst the sacred Temples of Moscow. Don't be fooled by ladies of the night, Maria and Helga, streetwise and toughened in the seedy underworld of Amsterdam. Match the cunning guile of Miguel, master bullfighter and the unvanquished fighting bull Brutus in the splendid surroundings of the Barcelona bull ring. Trade blows with the awesome titan Hans and his drunken compatriot outside a German beerhouse. Finally confront the merciless terrorists of the Middle East amongst the battle torn ruins of Beirut.
Tough and mean .... you're the Human Killing Machine!
U.S. GOLD
U.S. Gold Ltd., Units 2/3 Holford Way, Holford, Birmingham B6 7AX.

If you go down to the arcades today... you'd probably bump into Ciarán Brennan.

CRACK DOWN

A map of the city provides an overview of the many secitons to complete.

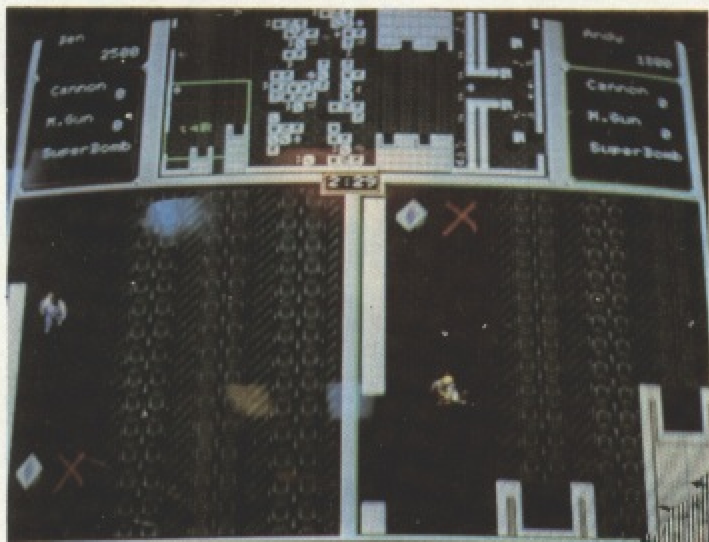


Crivens! A Sega arcade *game* as opposed to a fairground ride. And it's not bad at that. Crack Down **is a one or two player, split screen shoot 'em up of sorts with a** Gauntlet**-style view-point.**

Taking the role of Special Agent Ben or Special Agent Andy, your objective is to run around scrolling streets, dropping bombs at key points to destroy areas of a vast city.

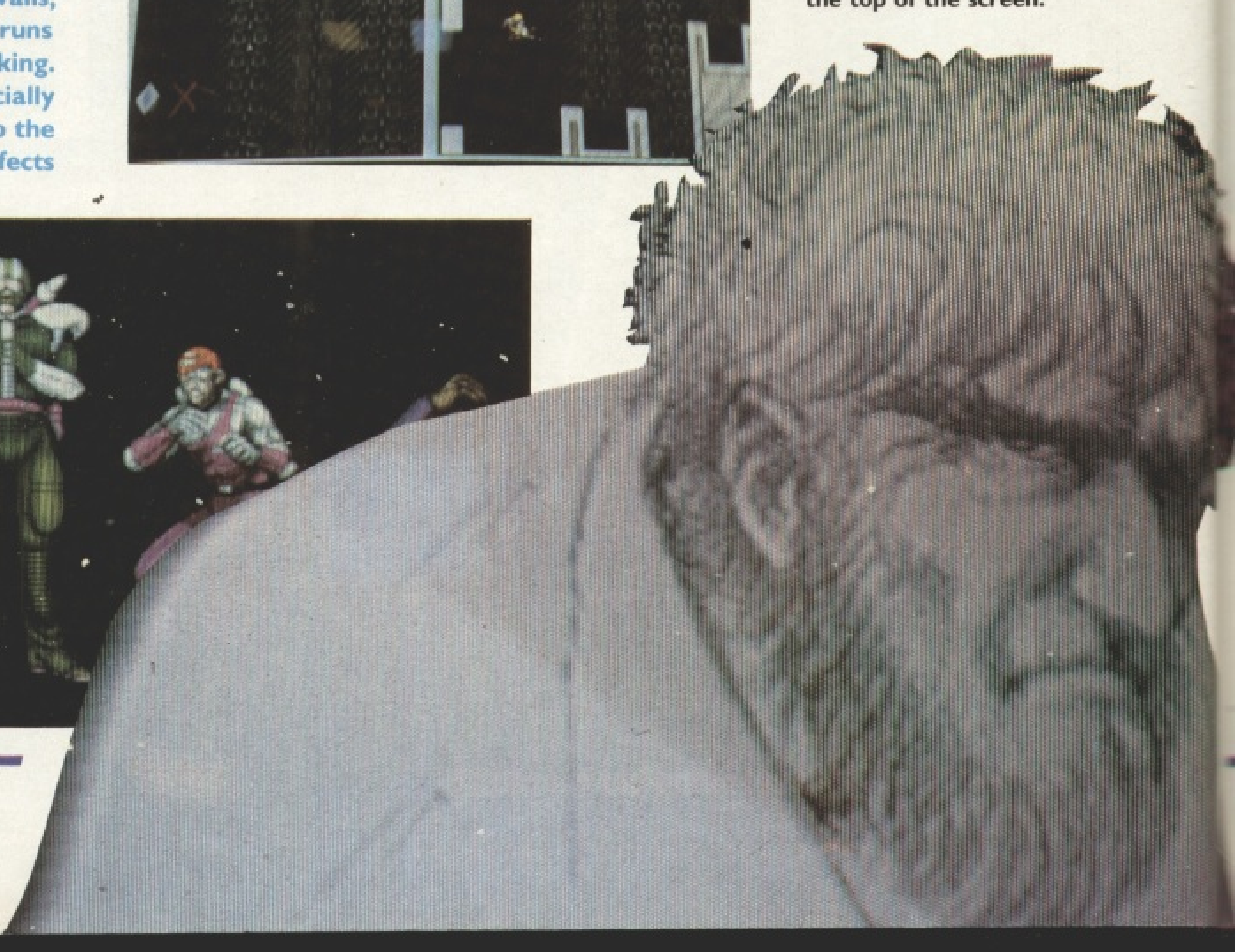
Pistol-packing adversaries shoot straight down the middle of the street, which means most of your time is spent ducking and diving behind walls, returning their fire. When your ammunition runs out, the action hots up as your feet do the talking.

Crack Down **is fast-paced and playable, especially with a friend. A throbbing soundtrack adds to the tension, and there's an impressive array of effects and speech.**



An unusually quiet slice of the action sees Special Agent Ben (left) and Special Agent Andy making their way through the maze-like streets of the city. 'X' marks the spot – where bombs are planted. For those with a tendency to get lost, a map of the immediate area is provided at the top of the screen.





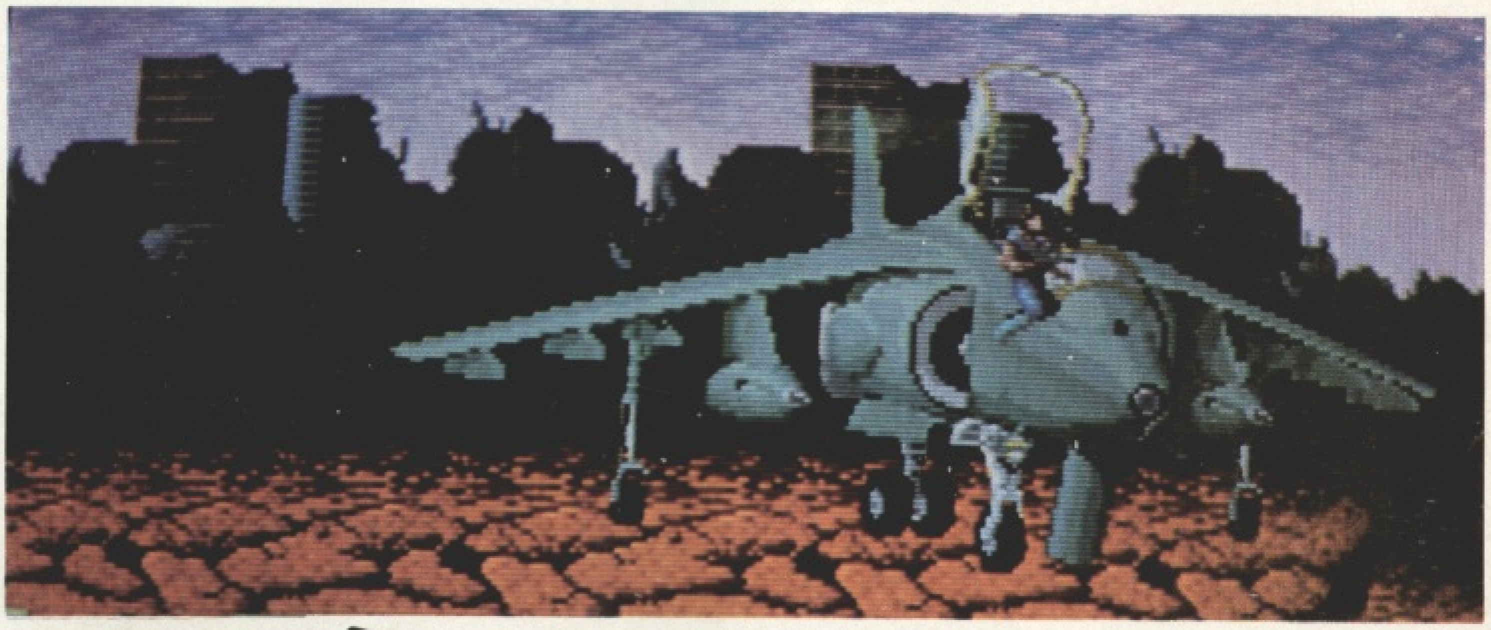


BAY ROUTE



You won't have guessed from the title, but this is a horizontally scrolling shoot 'em up from Sunsoft in conjunction with Sega. There's nothing new on offer, as you take on gun-wielding soldiers, bikers, and, later on, jet-packers with your armoury of four weapons selected with a second fire button.

▼ The attract sequence is considerably more entertaining than the game itself. Having been given a mission briefing, a plane flies out of the distance and lands. Out you get with your mate and off you go . . .



▲ All's quiet on the horizontally scrolling front as you pause for breath before resuming battle with the hordes of fighters and bikers.





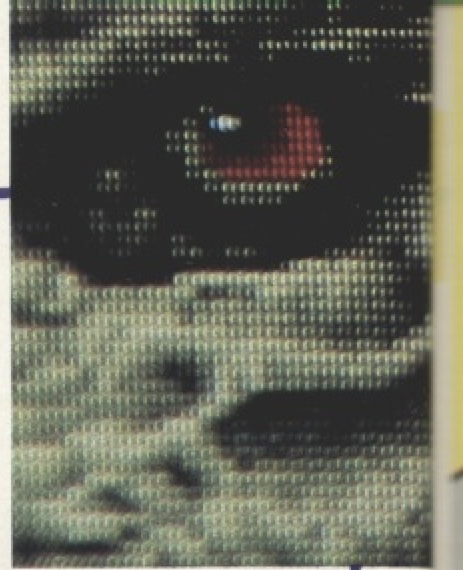


At the time of writing we couldn't put a name to this one, but it's worth a mention . . . Anyone who's played Taito's Double Dragon will be on familiar territory, but this is about 10 times more violent. The instructions say it all: "To kill the punks, smash them!"

Three fire buttons accompany the joystick on the cabinet, providing a unique combination of moves (punches and kicks) and just to provide a little spice, there are weapons aplenty to acquire, like switchblades, baseball bats and the like. It's not the easiest game of its type to play, partly due to the variety of moves available but mainly because there are so many punks. But it's great fun nonetheless.

▼ Cornered! The opposition proves too much to handle and it's Game Over for your chum.





PREHISTORIC ISLE (IN 1930)

Surprisingly, SNK's latest isn't another Paul and Vince Ikari Warrior-style romp, but a horizontally scrolling shoot 'em up with bi-planes, plenty of reptiles and a novel weapon feature.

Green Hell Island is inhabited by all manner of prehistoric creatures . . . cavemen and assorted dinosaurs, including formations of pterydactyls and even cavemen hanging from the 'birds'. Dinosaur eggs occasionally float on screen and are shot to reveal the game's most innovative touch – an extra weapon similar in nature to the R-Type.

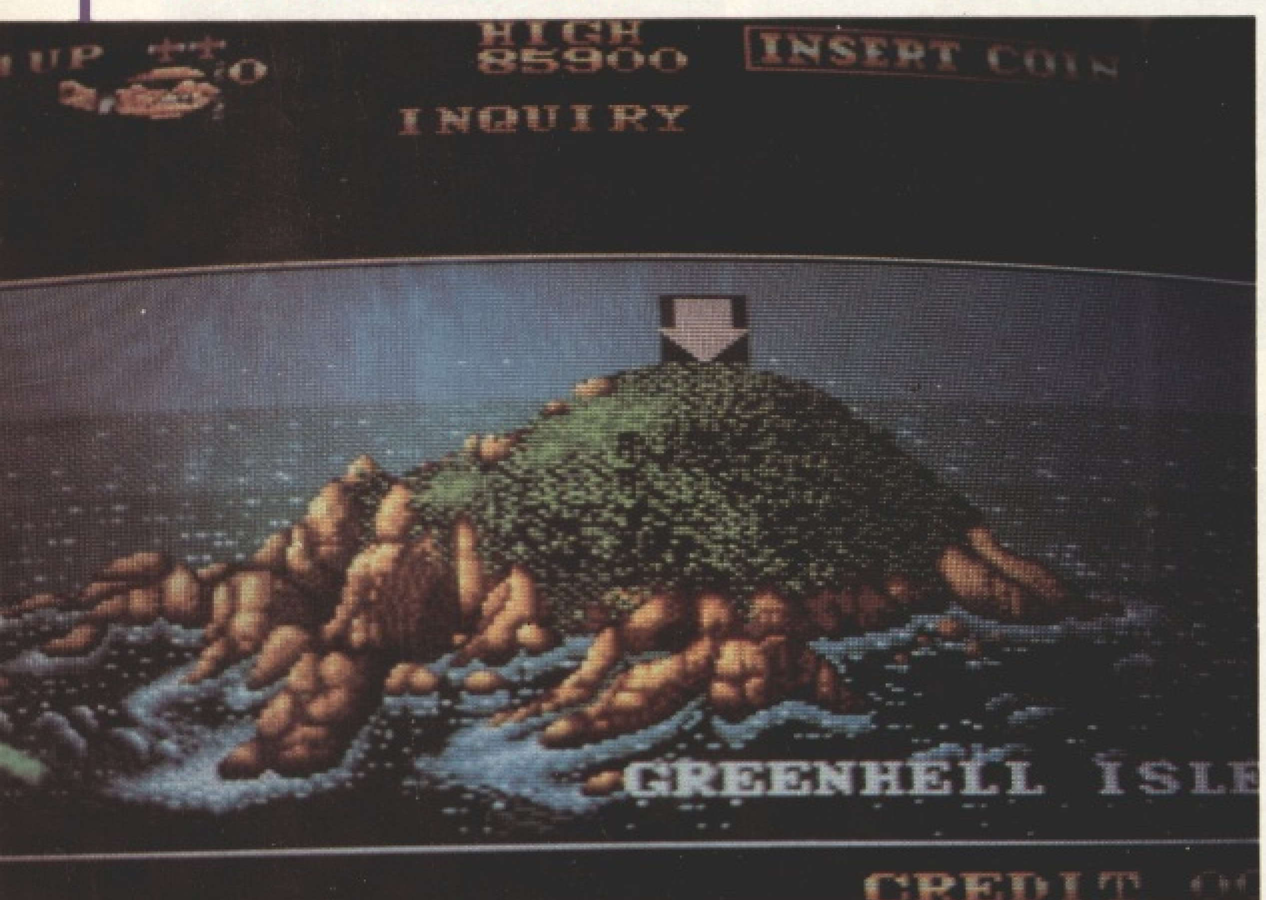
Pressing a second fire button moves the pod around the plane into one of eight positions. Super shots are fired forward when the device is up front, bombs are released when it's affixed beneath the plane, and bullets are also shot from behind when the pod is stuck on the back.

A large dinosaur is found at the end of a level, kicking off with an unusually belligerent Brontosaurus on Level One and a Tyranosaurus Rex on Level Two.

Prehistoric Isle is great fun, doubly so when a second player joins the fray. A stirring soundtrack gets the adrenalin flowing and is accompanied by plenty of digitised roars and screams.



The attract sequence; a large, scaly beast rises up on to the screen and lets out a roar.

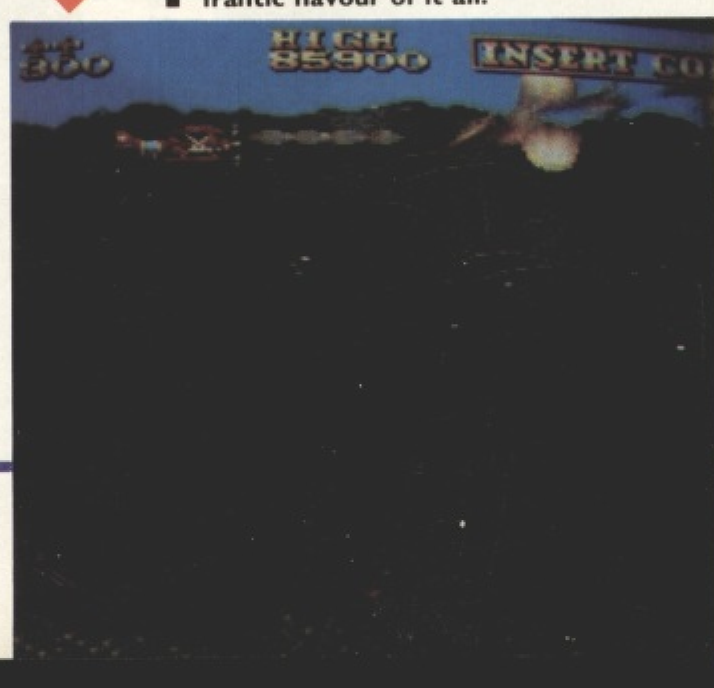


Take a closer look at where it's at . . .



You are here . . . The recently discovered Green Hell Island.

This blurred still barely captures the frantic flavour of it all.



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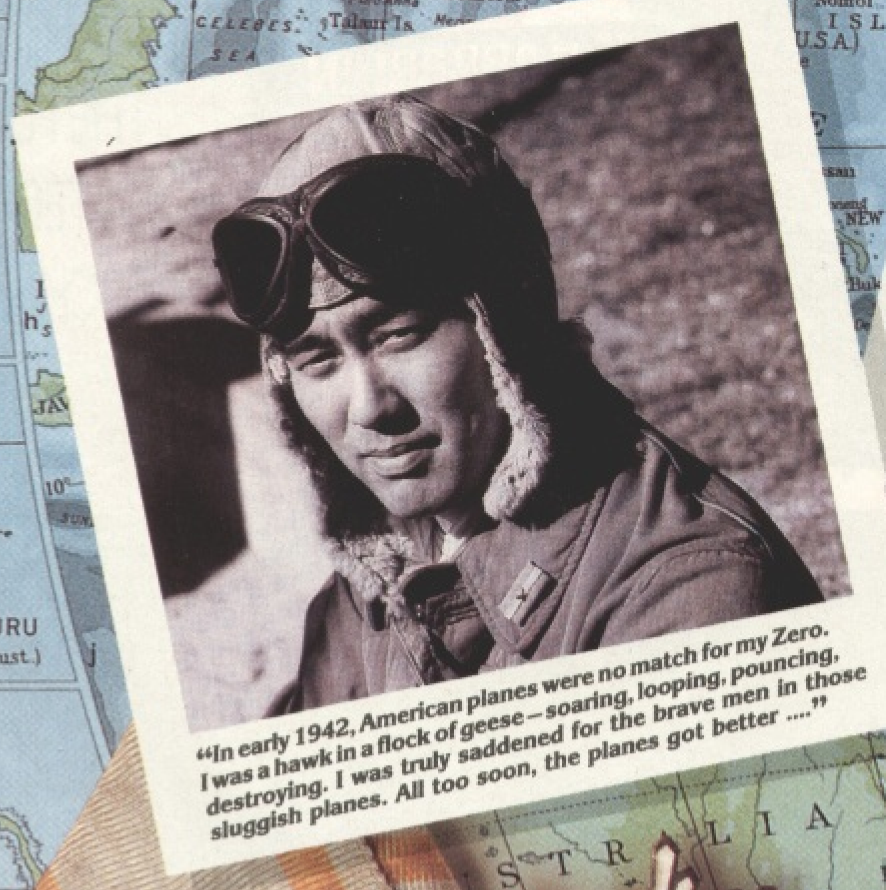
Naval warfare changed dramatically in the first few months of the World War II Pacific theatre. Almost overnight, the balance of power shifted from the huge guns of the battleships to the torpedoes and dive bombs of the carrier-based aircraft. Now, entire battles were fought without the great fleets coming into visual range.

It became clear that control of the seas – and the outcome of the war – would belong to the navy with the most effective carrier force. And at the beginning of 1942, the advantage was clearly with Japan.

With the devastating success of the Pearl Harbour strike, Japan's fleet was larger and stronger. Japanese aircraft were swifter and more manoeuverable. Their pilots were more seasoned. Even their torpedoes were more reliable.

But before 1942 was over, the tide in the pacific war had turned. Four pivotal battles – Coral Sea, Midway, the Santa Cruz Islands, and the Eastern Solomons – spelled the end of the Japanese advance and the beginning of a long retreat.

Battlehawks 1942 provides a fascinating, challenging, and very exciting pilot's eye perspective of these historic confrontations.



"In early 1942, American planes were no match for my Zero. I was a hawk in a flock of geese – soaring, looping, pouncing, destroying. I was truly saddened for the brave men in those sluggish planes. All too soon, the planes got better ...."



"My first burst of tracers skimmed the Val's tail. Just as I corrected my aim, he dove. I followed, and my Wildcat's cannons took his plane apart by bits and pieces. Suddenly, he pulled up and bailed through his shattered canopy. Moments later, the Val exploded ..."

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NTA CRUZ, SOLOMONS.. AT CHANGED HISTORY

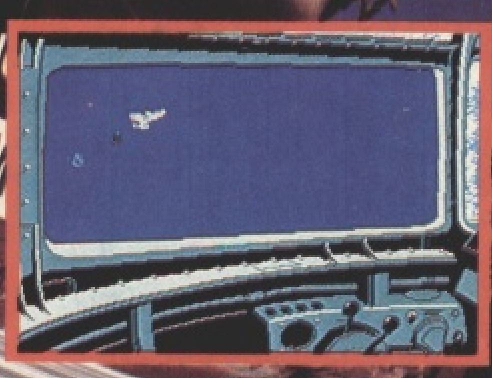


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- **Record the action!** Unique instant replay camera can be located to give any view – bird's eye to sea level – providing a record of events even when the action has finished.





Screenshots from IBM PC version.

U.S. Gold Ltd., Units 2/3 Holford Way, Holford, Birmingham B6 7AX.



ALTERNATIVE ENTERTAINMENT

Is there really more to having A Good Time than the ST, Amiga and PC? Each month we take a look at alternative means of enjoyment – kicking off this issue with Sega's 16-bit console.

Can consoles live side by side with computers? Some feel that consoles will replace STs and Amigas as it's argued that most people want the easiest and not necessarily the best means of playing games – an advantage consoles have to offer. Simply plug in and turn on and a game's yours for the playing. Instantaneous loading with minimal fuss and none of the problems associated with disks.

Computers offer a higher level of interaction and consequently a greater element of mystery... an unknown which instills fear in some and which others are eager to explore. Computers serve to satisfy the curious on many different levels. Anyone not concerned by what goes on beneath the plastic probably owns a console, which means there is the possibility of a harmonious coexistence... unlike seven years ago when consoles were replaced by computers.

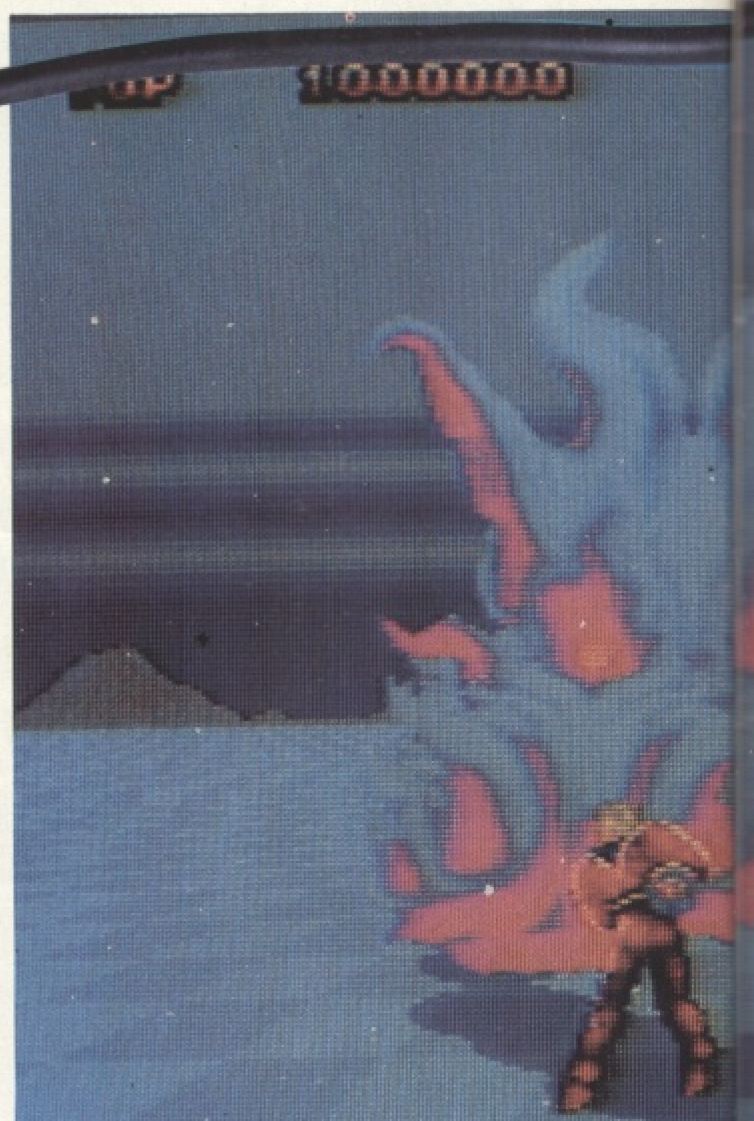
Following Nintendo's recent domination of the Japanese and American software scene with its technologically archaic 8-bit console and its failure to repeat this performance in Europe, the next Big Thing seems to be the 16-bit console. It's debatable whether the '16-bit' label means enough to the converted to entice them to make the jump, but the quality of the graphics alone is probably a sufficiently large carrot.

And it looks like Sega is going to be first to establish its 16-bit baby in the UK.

Founded in 1951 as Service Games Japan Co Ltd, Sega started life importing, selling and operating jukeboxes and coin-operated game machines. In 1965 Sega Enterprises Ltd was formed – 24 years later the company operates 200 amusement centres throughout Japan alone, with roughly 40,000 of its arcade machines in operation in nearly 2,000 locations worldwide.

Sega's arcade game portfolio is impressive, ranging from uninspired 'clones' like **Wonderboy** (similar to Nintendo's **Super Mario Bros**)

Smooth 3D graphics are wasted on weak gameplay in Space Harrier II. **Sadly, the Mega Drive conversion doesn't simulate the hydraulic appeal of Sega's original coin-op.**



Hopefully Activision's ST and Amiga conversions of Altered Beast **will be up to the same high standard as Sega's own effort for its Mega Drive.**





The 16-bit Sega Mega Drive in all its light-weight glory. There's a socket for a pair of stereo headphones plus a built-in volume control, a reset button, and two controller holes. The kidney-shaped controllers sport three fire buttons and a raised cross shape (instead of a shaft) for movement.

and **Quartet** (one of the first multi-layer games to appear after **Gauntlet**) to licenced 'conversions' (Broderbund's **Choplifter**) to the more elaborate 'fairground ride' cabinets which the company pioneered (**Space Harrier, Out-Run, Afterburner, Galaxy Force,** and **Powerdrift**).

The company's console debut was an 8-bit machine which failed to equal the immense success of its direct rival the Nintendo. It surfaced in Europe in 1986, but wasn't available here until 1987. Now, according to its UK distributor Virgin Mastertronic, the Sega's doing very well.

The 16-bit Sega, or Mega Drive as it's known, features at its heart a 7.6MHz 68000 processor and a 3.5MHz Z80A processor, with 72K of RAM and 64K VRAM. Sound is in stereo (provided by FM, PSG and PCM chips), while the 512 colour graphics come from a VDP and Sega's custom-built LSI.

Loosely translated, this means the 16-bit Sega Mega Drive is fast, with smart sound and graphics capabilities to match.

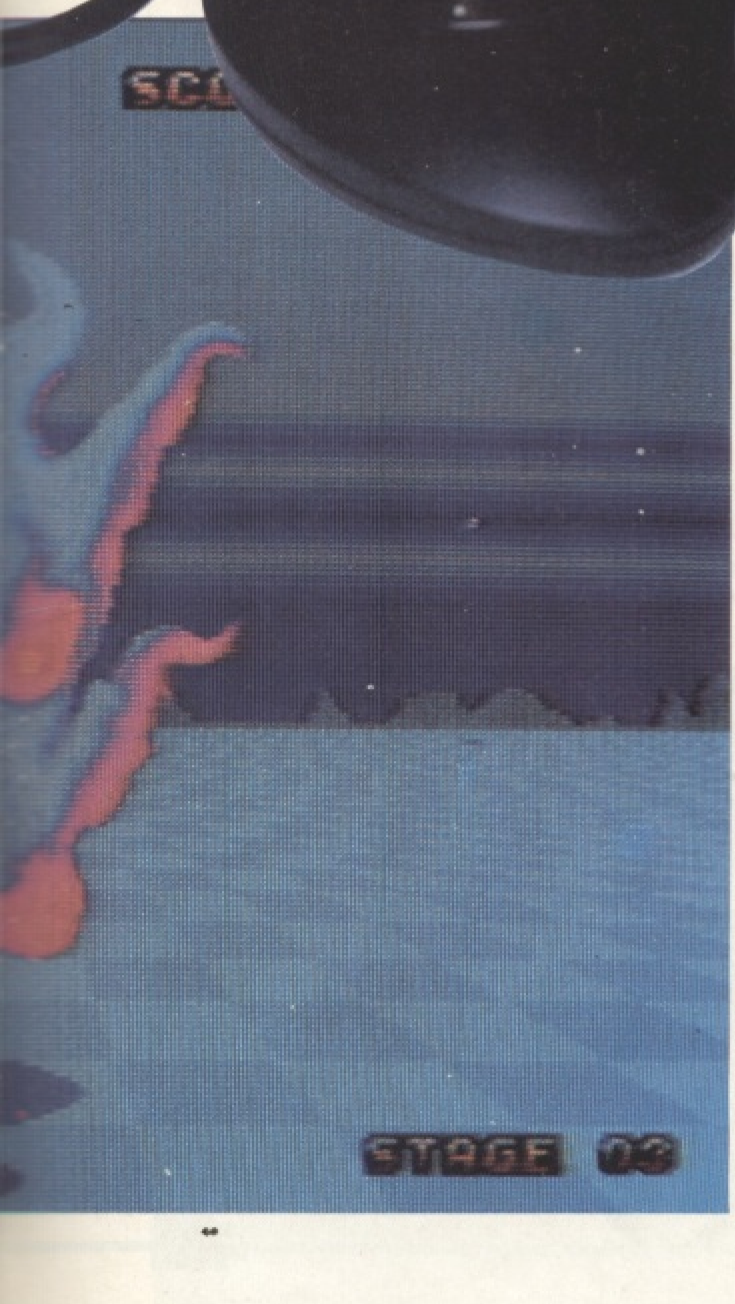
At present there are only three games available for the system – all of them with an arcade conversion flavour. An almost coin-op perfect version of **Altered Beast** is the best of the bunch. **Super Thunderblade** and **Space Harrier II** on the other hand, are basically glorified renditions of Sega's classic fairground rides and offer adequate thrills and spills.

Understandably, other cartridges are planned, quite probably conversions of existing 8-bit Sega best-sellers – like the horizontally scrolling adventures of **Alex Kidd**.

A price and specific release date have yet to be set, but the Mega Drive is likely to cost less than £200 and may make it to living rooms across the country in time for granny's Christmas visit.



Alex Kidd **explores a 16-bit Miracle World.**



Chopper chortles in Super Thunderblade. **The 3D isn't as smooth as might be expected, but it's faster and marginally more playable that US Gold's ST and Amiga conversions of the original coin-op.**





Will Leisure Suit Larry find love in Europe? Will the Police Quest pound a bobby's beat? Is this the end of the software world as we know it? Steve Cooke meets Sierra On-Line and discovers some Fascinating Facts...

THE QUEST STARTS

Who's the biggest 16-bit software house in the US of A? Electronic Arts? Mediagenic/Activision? The Pentagon?

Nope, it's Sierra-On-Line. A company that has made barely a dent so far on the UK games scene, but reckons it could be Number One in a matter of months. To drive the point home, it held its press conference for the unconvinced on a battleship on the Thames. Soon. It seems to think. It will be sailing it up to Birmingham and sinking USS Gold. Are these guys for real, or should the rats be packing their bags?

Of course, what happens in the States is not necessarily an indication of future British developments. Any country that can make a mass industry out of Pee-Wee Herman has a few screws loose, to say the least. But there are some disturbing (or welcome, depending on who you are) indications that Sierra may well prove to be the BIG British software event of 89/90. Here's why...

First, there's the money. Sierra has it coming out of its ears. Last year one out of every four games sold in the US had the company's name on it. Instead of buying tweed jackets and Jaguars – weird how the Yanks demonstrate their wealth by imitating one of the poorest European nations, itsn't it? – Sierra sank a chilling seven million dollars into developing SCI – the Sierra Creative Interpreter.

This programming system is a 'games-designer-friendly' interface that enables product designs to be coded rapidly and then almost instantly converted to any 16-bit format. Importantly for us UK games players, it supports Amiga and ST standards, so as soon as the PC version is out, the others arrive hot on its heels.

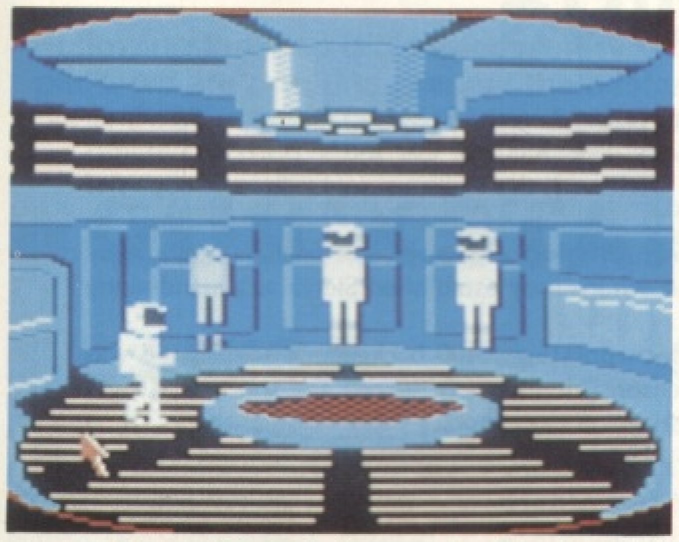
At a time when more and more emphasis is being placed on games design rather than brute force coding, SCI is a potential bomb for Sierra to offload onto companies like US Gold and Ocean and blast them out of existence. Its ease of use attracts highly qualified designers – it currently has people from Supertramp working on the music, writers from The Twilight Zone working on game scenarios, and former US intelligence officers turning out espionage plots.

What's more, SCI was tailor-made for 16-bit machines. In fact, the company made a decision some years back to hit the 16-bit market and ONLY the 16-bit market. The Sierra blend of animation and adventure cries out for high clock rates, and although it can look pretty dicky on a bog-standard PC, it's the opposition that are going to look dicky when these mini-movies are belting along at 25mhz.

Pee-Wee Herman may not be to everyone's taste, but Activision, who is currently handling Sierra in the UK, was amazed at the success of **King's Quest IV** and the **Leisure Suit Larry** games. Perhaps there'll come a time when it wishes it left Sierra behind in the States...

Dig the pretty VGA graphics as Rosella meets the Unicorn. This beast is the key to solving one of the major puzzles of the early part of KQ4 and has a nasty habit of hopping from one location to another. Your ultimate objective in this fairy-tale scenario is to defeat the wicked witch Lolotte and help your father (the King) regain his healthy disposition... Unicorns, minstrels, dwarves, and figments of the romantic imagination abound throughout the game – be thankful there aren't any hobbits.





Sequel time again, this time following on the heels of Space Quest I. This shot, believe it or not, comes from the Amiga – which only goes to show that although Sierra is a 16-bit software house, its real graphic talents are spelt PC.

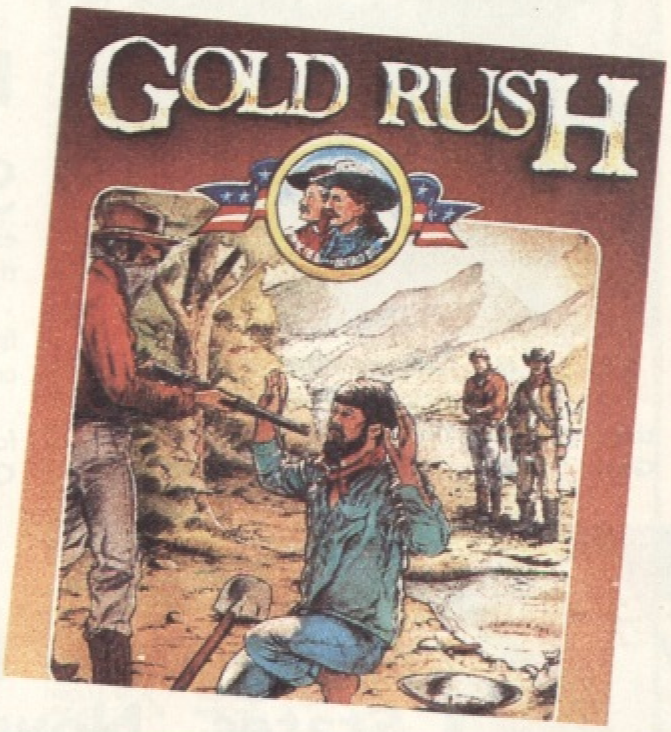
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THE ARSENAL FOR 89

Sierra's full-frontal assault this year features six games including:

Space Quest III

Full music soundtrack (MIDI compatible with the Roland MT32 and IBM Music Feature Card) by Bob Siebenberg of Supertramp accompanies Roger Wilco's struggle against the evil space software house, Scumsoft. Time will tell whether this is a hot potato, or the crime of the century.





Gold Rush!

Another 3D animated adventure which recreates pioneering history as you make your way through central America to the gold fields of California. Sierra probably owns most of them anyway.

Silpheed

A licence from Game Arts of Japan (authors of **Thexder**) that combines arcade action with animated adventure.

The Plantation Murders

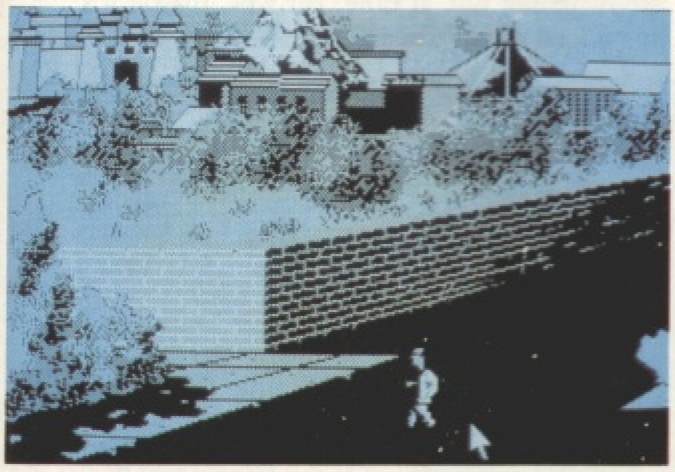
Part Mel Brooks, part Agatha Christie, says Sierra, except that it can't spell the famous Limey novelist's name correctly. Let's hope this isn't a bad omen.

Code Name: Ice Man

Diplomatic kidnappings, nuclear submarines, Middle East conflict, the end of the world... and worse, from the author of **Police Quest**.

King Arthur

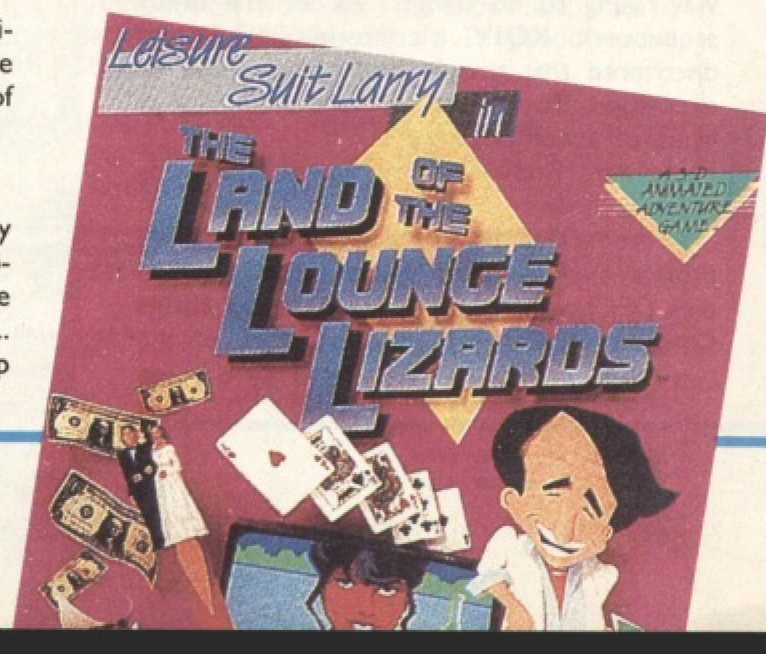
Wield Excalibur as you unseam the ungodly in your search for the Holy Grail, developed jointly by the script writers of The Twilight Zone and the animators of... erk!... Spiderman! Just watch Lancelot nip up that wall...

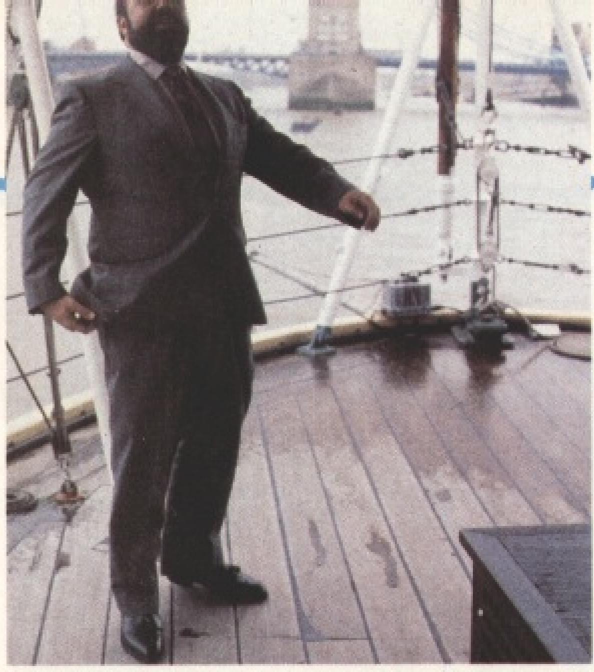


Follow-up to the original highly popular Larry prog, this dose of slick US humour offers everything except the soft porn some feeble-minded punters might be yearning for.









Al Lowe, creator of Leisure Suit Larry, on board the battleship that could soon be pumping shells at the USS Gold.

IN THE BEGINNING

Sierra is now a big US public company, but it was started by Ken and Roberta Williams in 1980. In an early mail-order success story that sounds very like Richard Garriott's (Origin Systems) experiences with his home-brewed BASIC program **Ultima 1**, the Williams' sold zillions of copies of their graphics adventure **Mystery House**.

Next came **The Wizard And The Princess**, then **Mission Asteroid**, and finally a move away from the kitchen table and a steady job to California where they established Sierra as a stand-alone company.

Time Zone, released in 1982, made waves by incorporating 1,400 background scenes and was followed by **Dark Crystal** (a licence from the Henson (Mr Muppet) movie) and the first **King's Quest** game, developed at the request of IBM to show off the graphics capabilities of the PC jr.

The 3D adventure format first really took off in 1984 and has spawned several successful games.



"We're the biggest 16-bit publisher in the States. Now you're moving to 16-bit in Britain... and we're coming over."



Meet The Worlds Oldest Games Programmer

...and don't mention wigs. Al Lowe, 42, creator of the lustful but totally uncool Larry Laffer is also the world's baldest games programmer and proud of it.

"I've had fun my whole life," he grins, brushing back a non-existent hair, "I've had two careers – teacher and programmer – and a hell of a good time in each." Brave words from a man who has just undertaken yet another **Leisure Suit Larry** project –yup, **Larry 3** is in the offing, folks, and lustier than ever.

"I can't give too much away," says Al, but he does respond positively to the criticisms I (and you, I expect) made about **Larry 2** and **Kings Quest IV** – particularly the way you had to wait around for so long while the character cleaned a house or bought a cold drink. Of course, he's got his excuses...

"SCI was a new language for us when we were developing those games. We didn't know exactly how to approach it. Some things have definitely changed, even in the second version of **Larry 2**, where I've speeded things up somewhat. I got pissed off at the amount of time it was taking to do things... As for the dwarf sequence in **KQIV**, it's interminable! We've discovered that people prefer interaction to exposition. They enjoy it, so there's lots of hands-off action in **Larry 3**..."

Hmmm... Knowing Larry, 'hands off' sounds highly unlikely.

Al is typical of the Sierra designers. He's been programming since he was at college (started on a DEC), worked on early versions of **Kings Quest** and **Police Quest**, then kicked off the Larry games after being inspired by a game called – ugh – **Softporn**.

"This was an early text-only Sierra product that was very popular in the early days," he explains, "and in it you pick up three girls. I didn't think that was the right attitude and suggested we make fun of the guy instead. He's the kind of guy, I reckoned, who would wear a leisure suit nowadays. Someone picked up on that and the name Leisure Suit Larry was born..."

Larry looks like becoming a Sierra institution now. But Al has got something else up his sleeve. "It's a really hot project," he enthuses. "It's like oops!" Mr Lowe rubs his pate and stops himself just in time. Ah well, maybe it's some kind of hair raising.



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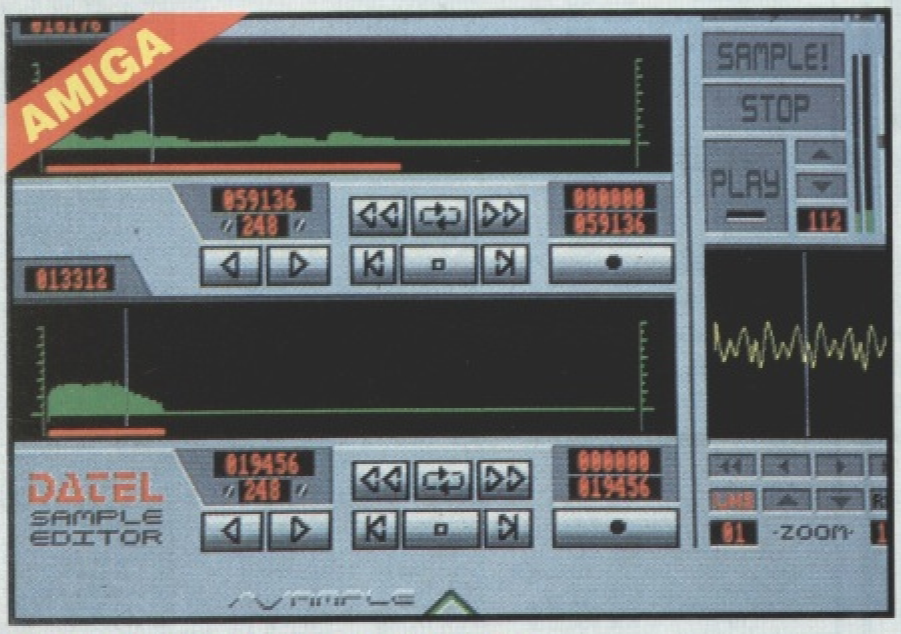
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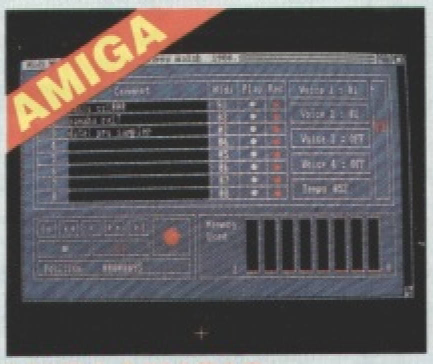
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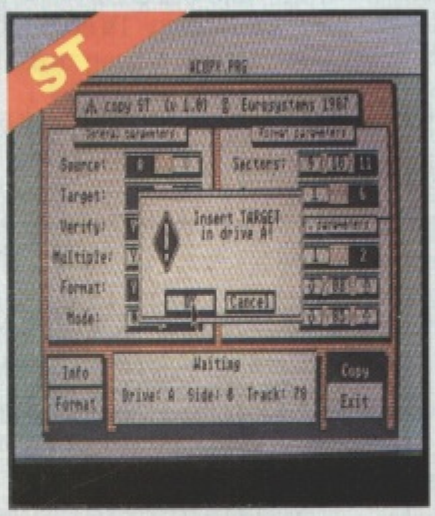
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ACE 2

BACKSPACE

Industry veteran Geoff Heath is the first to face The One's firing line – questions and complaints from you, the reader.

A man of many hats, **Geoff Heath's** career to date can only be described as colourful. Let the man tell his own story and it comes out something like this:

"I was involved with a few songwriters in the past, and I went on to form my own music publishing company before founding Activision in the UK.

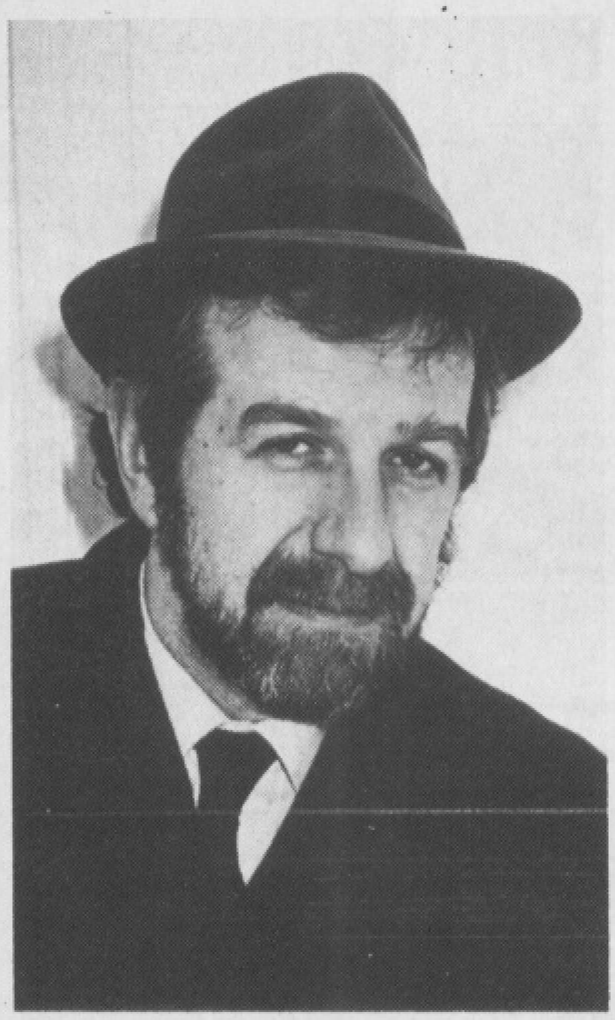
"Following that I was given the task of reviving the fortunes of Melbourne House, and then took Mastertronic into full price software and the arcade business."

A thread of modesty runs through this statement, as Geoff neglects to tell us that the songwriters in question included Lennon and McCartney and that his tenure at Activision included the launching of the original **Ghostbusters** – to this day one of the best-selling 8-bit computer games.

Geoff's current task is to establish Mindscape International in Europe. The plan is to fully exploit Mindscape's gems (**Balance Of Power, Deja Vu, Colony, Uninvited** and so on), relaunch the sports titles, including **Ice Hockey** and **Soccer** and to release new versions – primarily for the 16-bit machines.

Future plans include distributing as yet unnamed American companies' product in Europe and, later this year, releasing several new titles, including two major licences.

With all that experience under his belt, Geoff knows a thing or two about this business, as Gary Penn found out when he met the Mindscape maestro to present him with some of your questions.



Phrophets of doom have been predicting that home computers are on the way out, and that the American blend of PCs and consoles could soon become the norm on this side of the water – what are your feelings on this?

No, I don't think the future of the industry lies in consoles and PCs. What's more likely to happen is that Amigas, STs and PCs will all end up living alongside each other. There is a market for consoles which will replace potential Spectrum and 64 owners – people who would have bought either will now buy a console. The reason why people buy PCs, STs and Amigas is because they can do a variety of other things: play games, exploit the machine's midi capabilities, make music, run spreadsheets – the list goes on. Sure, people buy computers principally to play games, but purchases are biased towards PC for word processor packages, spreadsheets and the like, towards the ST for music, say, and the Amiga for graphic applications.

So is it true that PCs are for the older games player?

There's a clear split in age groups between console and 16-bit owners. The average age of console owners will probably go down to around, say, 10, while the average age of 16-bit owners will probably remain as broad as it is now – anything from 12 up to 50.

Fair enough, but which market will Mindscape be putting its resources into?

Mindscape suports both 16-bit software and, currently in the States, Nintendo software. The console market in America now accounts for 85% of all entertainment software sales, but I don't think that this is likely to happen here to that extent. The disposable income of the average 10 year-old in the UK does not extend to a £24.95 game every month. However, the console market will certainly grow dramatically over the next couple of years. Console software is expensive and will always be expensive because of the raw costs involved, and again, the long development time of the games. The cartridges can't be reused and have a long production time, but on the plus side – for the time being – they can't be copied.

Where in your opinion does the imminent Konix console fit into the scheme of things?

The Konix machine has enormous potential, but as is the case with all new technology it will take time to perfect and establish itself in the market place. The PC Engine is technically the best of all the consoles, but it's not clear at this stage what NEC are doing with it. I'm not sure even they know!

So what incentive is there for the public to buy a 16-bit computer as opposed to a console?

16-bit means more power and the consumer expects more. But with this comes more development time and higher development costs. We are appalled at the price of some 16-bit software, a lot of it just doesn't warrant the £24.95 price point. 16-bit software is more than twice the price of a CD, so if you're going to charge £24.95 for a piece of software then you have to give the consumer a good £24.95's worth. In other words, something that lasts months rather than hours.

Why is software so expensive?

This is because it takes 18 months to two years to write something along the lines of, say, Balance Of Power. **Some software is now being developed along the lines of mini-movies – and you can pay up to seven pounds to see a film once in the cinema. Unlike a few years ago where one programmer did everything, you now have up to 25 people involved in the development of each game.**

How does a games player know what's going to be good or bad software?

I think the best thing for the consumer to do is read reviews, believe some of the advertising, and make your own decisions. Good software is still amazing value. If you can play a game for 100 hours at £24.95 that's 25p an hour, which, all told, is cheaper than buying chewing gum.

Next Month's BackSpace sees Activision Supremo Rod Cousens in the hot seat. So get your quips, queries and complaints rolling in to BACKSPACE, The One, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, LONDON EC1R 3AU.


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